



SYRIA'S POLICY TOWARDS THE LEBANESE CONFLICT: 1975 - 1990

**ABSTRACT
THESIS**

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BY

USEN MADMAN

Under the Supervision of

DR. JAWAID IQBAL

**CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

Syria's Policy Towards the Lebanese Conflict: 1975-1990

In the 1970s, various internal tensions inherent to the Lebanese system and multiple regional developments contributed to the breakdown of governmental authority and the outbreak of civil strife in 1975. The cause of the Lebanese civil war was neither exclusively internal nor exclusively external, nor was its settlement. Syria as an external major power had intervened in the Lebanese conflict.

The Syrian role in the Lebanese civil war has to be analysed from the point of view of the developments that had been taking place at the regional level during the two years following the October war. The Egyptian – Israeli disengagement agreement on Sinai in September 1975 left Syria isolated. After the Sinai accord Egypt withdrew from the confrontation against Israeli occupation. The Sinai agreement meant that Egypt could not effectively come to Syria's rescue if war broke out again with Israel. Thus Syria felt particularly vulnerable to an Israeli military attack from across the Golan Heights. However, there was another more serious dangers – the danger of an Arab – Israeli war sparked off by an Israeli invasion of South Lebanon.

Israeli occupation of South Lebanon would increase Syria's strategic vulnerability considerably by providing Israel with new front in any future war. The Israelis could engage the Syrians on the Golan Heights while simultaneously launching an offensive aimed at Damascus through the highly exposed Bekka Valley in Lebanon and the Syrian are incapable of fighting the Israelis on two fronts. The operation of Palestinian guerillas had already provoked a series of Israeli raids into Lebanon and the Syrians feared that if the guerilla operations continued. Israel would use them as a pretext for occupying South Lebanon.

Consequently, the Syrian regime pursued a convoluted course regarding Lebanon. On the one hand, Syria supported the PLO and other Muslim radical elements in Lebanon, which were considered useful as troublemakers against Israel and were also perceived as increasing Syrian influence over events in Lebanon. On the other hand, it seems that Syria would have preferred the political system to remain intact and controllable. Thus, Syria sought to end the Civil War in order to preserve the *status quo*, albeit in a modified form.

Another consideration which shaped Syrian policy towards the Lebanese conflict was the Syrian desire for a peaceful settlement of the Arab – Israeli dispute on the basis of an Israeli withdrawal from more or less all the Arab territories occupied since 1967 and the setting up of an

independent Palestinian state on the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Then, from the Syrian viewpoint, in such a case the need for Syrian intervention in Lebanon became all the more necessary.

And the final consideration that determined Syria's policy towards the civil war was the Syrian belief that Lebanon and Syria are really integral parts of a greater Syria and that the divisions between the two countries was a result of conspiracy hatched by the French to serve their own colonial interests. To Assad the Syrian and Lebanese are one people and it is difficult to draw a line between Lebanon's security in its broadest sense and Syrian security.

All these considerations which underlay Syria's policy towards the Lebanese civil war. The civil war which started with the Ayn al-Rummana massacre passed through five distinct phases. The first phase was characterized by fighting between the Palestinians and the Kataib party, which resulted in a cabinet crisis. The cabinet crisis in turn was transformed into a conflict among Lebanese themselves. It ended with the formation of the six-member 'Salvation Cabinet' of Karami.

The second phase was characterized by a temporary halt in the fighting which lasted until early September 1975 when large-scale fighting broke out and resulted in the destruction of the downtown

commercial area of Beirut. This phase ended with the formation of a twenty-member National Dialogue Committee. The third phase was characterized by the continued efforts to reach an agreement on political reforms.

In the fourth phase the conflict took on a Lebanese – Palestinian character when the Christians started the siege of the Palestinian camps of Tell al-Zatar and Jisr al – Basha. This phase also witnessed an increase in the role of Syrians in trying to bring about a ceasefire. Syrian mediation efforts led to the declaration of the Constitutional Document.

The final phase of the civil-war was characterized by a continued offensive of the National Movement and Palestinians against the Christians who were now on the losing side. In the face of the continued National Movement offensive Christians strong – holds every where began to shrink and for the first time Syria began to give indications that it no longer supported the Muslims and was quite prepared to move against them. The final phase came to an end with the Syrian military intervention on 9 April 1976 against the National Movement and Palestinians.

During the first two years of the war, the balance of forces favored the LNM and their Palestinian allies. They tried to advance their plan but

were unable to impose it, especially after the Syrian military intervention in 1976. By 1977 the LNM forces were in retreat and their ability to influence political events declined, especially after the assassination of Kamal Junblatt in 1977. Gradually, the LNM abandoned its program of political reform and in 1980 began building bridges with the traditional Islamic leadership. The new program that it developed was based on a preservation of the traditional confessional system but with a redistribution of confessional power to reflect demographic and political changes. During the period of 1976 to 1982, the Lebanese state under President Elias Sarkis undertook various initiatives to find a negotiated settlement to the Lebanese conflict, but none succeeded. Meanwhile, the Lebanese Front was gradually strengthening its position and awaiting favorable regional developments to impose its own will.

The Israeli invasion of 1982 dealt a staggering blow to the Palestinians and the LNM and dramatically strengthened the Lebanese Front, bringing its militant leader, Bashir Gemayel, to the presidency. Bashir Gemayel was assassinated within days of his election, and his brother, Amin, was hastily elected in his stead. In the wake of the invasion American involvement in Lebanon grew, aimed mainly at brokering a withdrawal agreement between Lebanon and Israel that, it was hoped, would be a precursor to a fuller peace treaty between the two

countries. However, by 1984, less than two years after the Kata'ib and President Amin Gemayel's coming to power, the Israeli "new order" in Lebanon had all but collapsed. The Lebanese-Israeli agreement initialed on May 17, 1984, ran into strong opposition from Syria, was not ratified and was soon abrogated by the Lebanese government; Israel began withdrawing from most Lebanese territories except a border strip in south Lebanon under the control of Israel's surrogate South Lebanon Army; the Lebanese government turned away from Israel and the U.S. and opened a dialogue with Syria to find a way out of the impasse. Indeed, by 1985, Syria had regained most of the power over Lebanese affairs that it had lost to the Israelis and Americans in 1982.

On another level, internal battles of that period, in the Mountain and Shouf area (1983), in Beirut (1984), and in East Sidon (1985) increased the sectarian character of the Lebanese conflict. Confessional segregation reached its peak and the confessionally-based militias ruled the various regions in closed and semi-closed enclaves. In the Christian areas the militias spread slogans of a "Christian republic," "Christian security," federalism and partition. In the Muslim areas, the emerging radical Islamic movements raised the slogans of an Islamic republic.

In 1983, a meeting in Geneva of representatives from the major Lebanese factions for a national dialogue conference achieved little

progress. They were able to agree on only one issue, the Arab identity of Lebanon. When these representatives met again in Lausanne in 1984, they were not able to make any further progress. In December of 1985, and with the encouragement and support of the Syrians, representatives of the dominant confessional militias, the Christian Lebanese Forces, the Shiite Amal Movement, and the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party, met in Damascus and reached an agreement, known as the Tripartite Agreement, on political reforms and special relations with Syria. However, in early 1986, President Amin Gemayel and Samir Geagea (intelligence chief of the Lebanese Forces) organized a coup against the Lebanese Forces leader Elie Hubayka. Hubayka was ousted from his position as the leader of the Lebanese Forces and the Tripartite agreement as rendered null and void.

A state of political paralysis prevailed in Lebanon between 1986 and the end of President Gemayel's term on September 23, 1988. In fact, Prime Minister Rashid Karami and the cabinet boycotted the President. Karami tendered his resignation as Prime Minister but soon thereafter, on June 1, 1987, was assassinated. Yet, the cabinet continued to function with Salim al-Hoss as acting Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the Lebanese and Syrian governments pursued talks to find an alternative to the Tripartite Agreement. The talks became deadlocked after the

assassination of Karami, but not before agreement on the broad outlines of political reform, relations between Lebanon and Syria, and the position vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. Most of the points agreed upon in these talks found their way into the Taif Agreement of 1989.

At the end of Gemayel's term, in September 1988, the failure to elect a new president led to a political vacuum which threatened to lead to partition. Gemayel appointed an interim cabinet headed by Army commander Michel Aoun, but this cabinet's authority was only accepted in the predominantly Christian areas; in West Beirut and other regions of the country, the original cabinet headed by Salim al-Hoss was regarded as the legitimate one. Executive authority was thus split between the military government of Aoun and the civilian government of Hoss. The two governments stood against each other and each claimed exclusive legitimacy. The legislative authority also experienced a vacuum because the parliament failed to renew the one year term of the speaker or to elect a new one.

The Lebanese conflict had always been linked in significant ways to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The various Lebanese factions had, repeatedly, attempted to exploit their associations with one or another of the conflicting regional parties to promote their own internal interests.

Such associations complicated and prolonged the civil war. Indeed, the polarization among the Lebanese and their efforts to defend or promote their interests invited and facilitated external intervention. However, if it was necessary to settle the internal dispute in order to decrease the role of external forces, it was also necessary to have their tacit acceptance or to minimize their capabilities to oppose a settlement in order for such a settlement to succeed. In 1989 such conditions were available.

Israel had already lost interest in Lebanon after 1984-85 and was preoccupied with the rising Palestinian intifada which had erupted in December, 1987, in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza strip. As for the Palestinians in Lebanon, the exodus of Palestinians troops from Beirut in August of 1982 dramatically weakened their influence. Later development between 1983 and 1988, battles between Syrian and Palestinian troops in the north, battles between Amal and the Palestinians in Beirut, and various intra-Palestinian fights, contributed further to the weakening of the Palestinians in Lebanon. The remaining Palestinian armed forces were isolated in a few refugee camps of South Lebanon.

In contrast to the Israelis and the Palestinians, Syrian influence in Lebanon increased steadily. Syrian influence in Lebanon had always been considerable, but the military intervention of 1976 gave it a solid material

footing. In the Civil War, Syria initially supported the LNM and their Palestinian allies until the Spring of 1976 when it became evident that the balance of forces was tipping dramatically in the latter's favor. On June 1, 1976, Syrian troops entered Lebanon, upon an invitation by the President and the Lebanese front and supported the Lebanese front in holding back LNM and Palestinian armed forces. In October 1976, two Arab summits held in Cairo and Riyadh endorsed the Syrian intervention. They established an Arab Deterrent Force, the majority of which was composed of Syrians. In 1982, Syrian troops were also forced by the Israelis to evacuate West Beirut along with the Palestinian troops. However, within a few years, Syria was able to regain its influence in Lebanon. In 1987, Syrian troops reentered West Beirut as well as various regions of the Mountain, the Shouf and the southern suburbs of Beirut. In 1990, Syrian troops reentered East Beirut and other predominantly Christian areas that they had been forced out of in 1978.

Part of this re-expansion of Syrian power was with Arab and Western acquiescence. This acquiescence was partly to avoid inter-Arab conflicts and partly to curry Syrian favor in the Persian Gulf and the Arab-Israeli peace process. In 1989, Iraq, free from the pressure of the war with Iran, intervened in support of General Aoun and the Lebanese Forces and against Syria. This could have led to an escalating regional

conflict between Iraq and Syria; therefore, the Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, held a summit meeting in Casablanca and formed a Tripartite Committee composed of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan of Morocco, and President Shadli Ben Jedid of Algeria to deal with the Lebanese crisis.

The Arab initiative in the Lebanese conflict was not only a way to minimize the threat of regional escalation, but was also interpreted by some as an attempt by the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, to counterbalance Syrian influence in Lebanon with a little bit of its own influence.

The U.S. was interested in curtailing the crisis in Lebanon so as not to derail the Arab-Israeli peace process. After the development of the Gulf crisis in 1990, the U.S. had the added concern of containing Iraq and gaining Syrian support for the Gulf war coalition. The end of then Cold War and the break up of the soviet Union strengthened American influence in the region and allowed it to pursue its policy objectives with fewer global obstacles. The U.S. supported the Ta'if negotiations and lent its support both in Arab circles and vis-à-vis Syria toward the successful completion of those talks.

The Ta'if Agreement (officially, the Document of National Accord) was the document that provided the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon. The signing of the Arab League sponsored Ta'if Accord in October 1989 brought a new dawn of peace into Lebanon. It set in motion the process of national reconciliation in Lebanon after more than sixteen years of fierce fighting and bloodshed. The end of war underlined the need to build a state of peace – one that can consolidate the foundations of stability and set the country on a steady course of orderly evolution and progress.

The Ta'if Accord has muzzled the fighting warlords in Lebanon, but it alone cannot ensure a long-term peace. For, the political stability and the rebuilding of its economic base depend on the actors and more so on their actions than a document or constitution. However, the accord's provisions lays stress on external and domestic prerequisites to durable peace. Externally, Lebanon's stability is inextricably linked to the degree of legitimacy and sovereignty respected by external actors. Domestically, socio-political stability is conditioned by a measure of legitimacy the state derives from its people, i.e., the reestablishment of state authority subsuming the sectoral or communal loyalties.

Following the implementation of the Ta'if Accord there has been a tremendous improvement in the Lebanese political situation. Lebanon

embarked on the series of reforms according to the provision of the agreement and signs of long lasting peace had begun to emerge except in the southern Lebanon. But the intermittent fights between Israeli forces and Hizbullah in the South still cast dark shadows of civil war. The “South Lebanon issue” is a part of the age- old Arab Israeli Conflict and can not be resolved without settling the Palestinian question. Under Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, Lebanon started improving economically; currency stabilized, and physical and social reconstruction was kept at the top of the priority.

The Ta’if Accord, undoubtedly, contains many provisions to tackle long standing sources of domestic instability, namely, socio-economic disparities and socio-political discontents. In the socio-economic arena provisions for equitable regional development and administrative decentralization are notable. In the political side, Ta’if accord emphasizes the abolition of political confessionalism as a basic national goal.

Deconfessionalisation is considered as an important step toward relegitimizing Lebanon’s political system. The Ta’if accord calls for the eventual elimination of the confessional system and it refers to the establishment of a national committee that will devise measures to guide the political transition.

However, the process of deconfessionalization is not as simple as it appears from outside. It is encumbered by severe limitations. Deconfessionalization means dis-enfranchisement of the existing establishment, which derives its power from the same confessional constituency. It is doubtful whether the confessional establishment would ever take such a drastic step to disempower those benefiting from it. Moreover, considering Lebanon's current political and social reality, whether an institutional change will produce a functionally deconfessionalised system or not is a question.

With regard to this, socio-political characteristics of Lebanon require a special mention. As primordial ties and politics are very much inter-related in Lebanon, deconfessionalization of the institutions alone do not bring complete democracy to the country. More than five years after signing the Ta'if Agreement, many improvements have been realized. The war has ended, and most Lebanese, except for one part of the southern population, have enjoyed a long forgotten peace since late 1990. State institutions have reestablished their authority, the army is united and gaining strength, and the deterioration in economic conditions has stopped, although a lot has to be done to face a serious financial deficit and economic stagnation. However, the Ta'if Agreement was and is still being implemented within a different balance of internal forces as

well as a different balance of regional, Arab forces, than originally intended. This is reflected through the increase of Syrian influence and a lack of balanced internal representation in Parliament because of the “Christian” decision to boycott the elections held in the summer of 1992. This imbalance has led some of those who participated in and supported the agreement to join the opposition and declare that what is being implemented is not the Ta’if Agreement.

Syria’s unquestionable influence in the Lebanese political affairs imposes constraints on its autonomy, with regard to Syria’s influence, it is considered as a mixed blessing. Although it protects Lebanon from the external penetrations there is a significant section in Lebanon, which perceives the Syrian domination with a “conquered” feeling. However, despite the negative domestic fallout that Syria’s presence provokes; its insulating effect has a positive domestic consequence; it allows the Lebanese to focus better on their internal problems.

In the event, Lebanon’s future shaped by external pressures and influences will be largely dependent on the regional peace process. Peace exercise between the major players, Syria, Israel and the Palestinians will have a tremendous effect on the Lebanese political scene.



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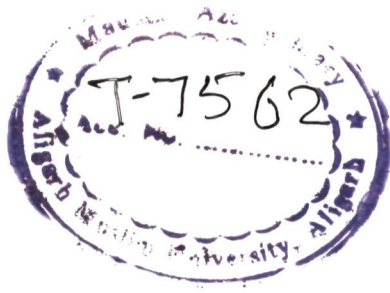
USEN MADMAN

Under the Supervision of

DR. JAWAID IQBAL

**CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)**

2007





Phone : Internal - 1385

CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH - 202002 (INDIA)


CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Thesis entitled **"Syria 's Policy Towards the Lebanese Conflict: 1975-1990"** by **Mr. Usen Madman** for the award of Ph.D. degree in West Asian Studies (Political Science) has been prepared under my supervision. This is his original work and to be best of my knowledge it has not been submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Iqbal".

(DR. JAWAID IQBAL)

Supervisor



*For My Mother,
Whose Love and Sacrifice
Have Made Everything
Possible*

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Preface

There have already been several studies of the Lebanese Civil War and of Syrian involvement in Lebanon, but no analytical account of the gradual development of this involvement, or of the direct interactions between the external powers, has been fully presented. Thus the focus of this thesis is a historical – analytical discussion of Syrian policies in Lebanon from 1975 to 1990.

Events in Lebanon cannot, of course, be explained solely in terms of the involvement of external powers. On the contrary, the actions of the external powers were generally in response to internal development. It is the basic assumption of this thesis that the nature of the Lebanese political system and its inherent instabilities had a profound impact on the successes and failures of the policies of the external actors. Thus, while Syria and Israel serve as the focus of attention, it has been necessary to relate to Lebanese internal political events throughout the narrative.

Indeed, the question of Lebanese internal politics is the starting – point for this thesis. Consequently, Chapter one deals with the historical background and overview of Syrian – Lebanese relation since

the medieval times upto the collapse of the Ottoman empire. It then goes on to discuss Syria-Lebanon relations during the mandate years focusing on the emergence of distinct Syrian and Lebanese identities unrelating in the independence of both countries from French rule designation of Al-Sham covered the subsequent post – colonial states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel during the Ottoman rule before the First World War upto the French mandate after World War and finally the region had reached to an independence after the Second World War.

Chapter two, discusses the basis of Lebanese political instability and goes on briefly to narrate the development of the Civil War, as well as the background to Syrian policies in Lebanon. Syria's interests, its perceptions of Lebanese domestic developments and its role within the context of the Lebanese Civil War has been analysed in this chapter.

Chapter three focuses on the complex interrelationship between developments within Lebanon and Israeli – Syrian strategic relations during 1977-1981, and also deals with the gradual evolution of the Israeli – Syrian deterrence dialogue concerning the limits of Syrian military intervention. This intervention is discussed both within the context of the Israeli – Syrian strategic relationship and as a factor affecting and being affected by internal developments in Lebanon.

Chapter four includes a discussions of the Israeli war objectives, some explicit, others ambiguous, and outlines the main military moves. The discussion of these moves serves to underline the politico-strategic objectives of Israel and Syria. The siege of Beirut and the intricate Israeli – Syrian – Lebanese – American interactions leading to the withdrawal of the PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter Five, examines the efforts to bring out an explicit and elaborate analysis of the political reforms in Lebanon.

It also analyses the Ta'if Accord highlighting its political salience in the reconstruction process. Finally, the problems and prospects for sustaining peace and stability in the country are discussed.

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Chronology

1914	World War I Started
1920 – 1945	French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon
1936	Arab revolt in Palestine
1939 – 1945	The World War II
1943	The Lebanese National Pact
1946	Syrian Independence
1970	General Hafez al-Assad came to Power
1975-1976	Lebanese Civil War
1977	Likud Party Came to Power
1978	Litani Operation
1981	Syrian Israeli Clash in Zahle
1982	Israeli Invasion of Lebanon
1983	Lebanese – Israeli May 17 th Agreement
1985	The Damascus Tripartite Agreement
1989	Ta'if Accord
1991	Lebanon – Syria Treaty

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1985	The Damascus Tripartite Agreement
1989	Ta'if Accord
1991	Lebanon – Syria Treaty

CHAPTER - 1

CHAPTER-I

Historical Background: An Overview of Syrian-Lebanese Relation

Introduction

Lebanon's relation with Syria has been one of the many persistent riddles of West Asian region. Historically connected and, culturally and politically conjoined, relationship between the two countries have been very significant for contemporary history for both the states. Their mutual relationship has kept the world busy with great deal of conflicts and temporary agreements. But Lebanon for Syria and vice versa is a relationship that will have to be evaluated in a completely different way that is not available under the rubric of international relations, because most of this bilateral relation has flourished under the non-nationalist factors like ethnicity, sectarian ties and pan-national sentiments.

Lebanon and Syria are two sections of a single historic geopolitical and cultural regional entity with diverse religious and ethnic constitution. Both ancient and mythical the lands of Lebanon and Syria are the founts of fables and fine crafts. By the late medieval age, the future of Lebanon and Syria had started to move in differing directions.

While Lebanon came under the Maronite Christian influence, and because of the sect's closeness to French Catholic School, ultimately became an amicable ground for resolving the East and the Western influences in the West Asian region, Syria continued to be under the strict domain of the Ottomans. But not for long., by the early twentieth century, Syria and Lebanon came under the influence of the European powers who took away large geographical tracts as "mandates". French interest was solidified, so was the difference between Lebanon and Syria. Two countries were set upon a long and difficult path that would finally take them both on a ride that would push Lebanon to a civil war situation and inaugurate a truly complex chapter of international politics in West Asia in general and the Levant in particular.

Al – Sham (or Vilayat al–Sham) under the Ottoman Rule

Since the medieval times the geographical designation of Al-Sham covered the subsequent post-colonial states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. Syria gradually acquired a predominantly Arab-Muslim character after the seventh century Arab conquest, and Damascus served as the capital of the Islamic Umayyad Empire until A.D. 750. Syria then preserved its distinctive cultural tone through two centuries of occupation by European crusaders and four centuries of rule by the Ottoman Turks. This region did never sit quiet. For centuries, war and

conflicts existed side by side with a rich intermixture of all the dominant ideas that shaped the world during those years. They came from both the east and the western parts of the globe. The movement of the cultured and the learned men was chronicled extensively. Even in the Holy Bible, mention is made of the "three wise men" who came carrying gifts to the baby Jesus after his birth from distant lands. Ideas mingled freely in the region and set off ripples that reverberated across the region and the world. This tendency was to continue for many centuries to come.

The Ottomans of Turkey ruled Syria through the system of Pashas, who governed with unlimited authority over the land under their control. The Pashas remained responsible only to the sublime Porte. The institution of Pashas was a unique Ottoman innovation. The Pashas were both administrative and military leaders. Furthermore, the Pashas ruled through smaller administrative districts headed either by a subordinate Turk or a loyal Arab. Throughout Ottoman rule, governors and the governed remained strangers except among those wealthier Syrians who entered government service or studied in Turkish universities¹.

Syria had known economic prosperity in the past but did not know it again under the Ottoman rule. At time attempts were made to rebuild the country, but on the whole the region that was to constitute Syria remained poor. The population decreased by nearly 30 percent. and

hundreds of villages virtually disappeared into the desert. Only the area known as Mount Lebanon achieved economic progress, resulting largely from the relatively independent rule of the Druze emirs.²

In the early sixteenth century the Ottomans captured Mount of Lebanon and Syria from the Mamluks and set about reorganizing the administrative structure of the conquered territories. In 1590 they set up an emirate over Mount Lebanon as a part of this process of administrative reorganization. During the entire period of its existence (1590-1842) the emirate, instead of being ruled by loosely spread families, was governed by two main dynasties, the Maans and the Shihabs³. Mount Lebanon had throughout history provided refuge to threatened minorities, fleeing from conquering invaders or religious persecution. At the time of creation of the emirate, Mount Lebanon was by and large dominated by two sects-the Maronites, in the North and the Druze Muslims in the South. Initially the emirate was under Druze⁴ political hegemony. However, as a result of certain socio-economic and demographic change in the mountains there was a gradual decline in Druze power and by the mid-eighteenth century the Maronites had replaced the Druze as the dominant political force in the emirate⁵.

This Maronite political ascendancy in Mount Lebanon generated considerable bitterness among the Druze. Resentful of the

Maronite domination and angered by Christian intrusion into the South the Druze revolted in 1841.

The revolt began in the north as a Maronite Christian peasant uprising against Christian landlords. As the revolt moved southwards to the territories where the landlords were Druze, the conflagration acquired an inter-sectarian character, and the Druze massacred some 10,000 Maronites.

Vilayat al-Sham or Syria which came to be known as Syria, used to be a part of the Ottoman Empire from 1517 until the end of World War I (see Map-1). Most of Syria was part of the three provinces (Vilayat) of Aleppo, Damascus, and Beirut. The Ottoman administration was concentrated mainly in the cities, thus allowing local leaders to rule remote towns and villages, provided they pay their taxes and refrain from rebellion. With the continuing decline of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. Western influence grew-first through economic and cultural penetration, later through political and military intervention. France was the power with the most ramified interests in Syria, a result of steady commercial activity as well as ties with the Catholic, and especially the Maronite community⁶.

Later, by the nineteenth century the European powers had started to take advantage of Ottoman weakness through both military and political penetration, including Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, subsequent British intervention, and French occupation of Lebanon. By the time, Lebanon was for the first time officially detached from Syria, and its administration came increasingly under the control of France⁷.

During the Ottoman rule, the Druze revolt led the Ottoman authority to abolish the emirate the following year. Western penetration became decidedly political after the Druze uprising in the Syrian province of Lebanon. A conference of the Five European powers met with the representatives of the Ottoman Empire and the Porte had agreed in principle to a scheme of partition, providing for Druze and a Christian Qu'im-Maqam (administrative deputy), each to rule over his coreligionists under the general supervision of the local Ottoman governor. This scheme was a compromise between the continued French, preference for the return of the Shihabs and Turkey's desire for her own direct control. Then they divided Mount Lebanon into two districts on qaim-mamiyah, one Druze and the other Maronite governed by a district ruler (qaim-magam) who was appointed and could be removed by the Pasha of Sidon, the Sultan's direct representative in the coastal Levant⁸.

The new solution, however, further aggravated the situation. The Druze and Christian population were already too intermingled to permit such a simple solution. Many Druze live in the Northern Maronite district and the Christian of Southern Druze district outnumbered the Druze. Besides, Maronite Christian Maronite backed by the French wanted authority overall Christians including those in the Southern district. The contradictions inherent in the new system led to renewed clashes in 1845⁹. Continuing tensions between the two sects finally resulted in 1860 in a civil war in the mountains. The fighting in that civil war assumed a savage character. Within a brief period of three months nearly 12,000 Christians were massacred, crops were destroyed and churches and monasteries burned down. In neighbouring Syria, for no apparent grievances, about 10,000 Christians were slaughtered in Damascus¹⁰.

Tellingly, the large-scale killing of Christians immediately led to French intervention. French protection of the Christians in Syria and Lebanon had a long history of its own. Official French contact with Syria and Lebanon can be traced back to the Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It was during the Crusades that most of Maronites came to communion with Rome. The earliest indication of what in later years was to become the French protectorate of Christians in the Ottoman

Empire is to be found in a letter dated 21 May, 1250 from Saint Louis to the Maronite Patriarch which reads:

We are convinced that this nation (the Lebanon) is a part of the French Nation, for its friendship for the French resembles the friendship, which the French have among themselves. We promise to give you and your people protection and to do whatever will be necessary for you well being.¹¹

The friendship that evolved between the Maronites and the Crusaders lasted for nearly two centuries. The Lebanese took a great interest in the French language and culture and intermarriage between¹² French and the Levantines furthered the bonds between the two people. With the end of the crusades, however, as the soldiers and missionaries began to depart from the Levant the once strong French influence was also gradually weakened.

The expansion of European trade and Commerce in the fifteenth and sixteenth century led to a renew of the close ties that had existed between French and the Levant in the past. The French King Francois I and Suleiman the Magnificent signed the first Capitulation, which accorded France certain commercial privileges and initiated the development of the French Catholic protectorate in the Levant. Subsequent renewals of the Capitulation enlarged its scope to include religious freedom to French subjects in the Ottoman Empire. In time the

indigenous Catholics of Syria and Lebanon were also brought under the cover the Capitulation and France came to be acknowledge as the protector of catholic Christians in the Levant¹³. King Louis XIV in a response to an appeal by the Maronite Patriarch formally “adopted” the Maronite community in Lebanon¹⁴.

This royal protection was renewed then and by the eighteenth century it had become a well established tradition. As a result of the special status of France in the Levant, French Catholic missionaries flocked in large numbers to this area. The French Jesuits who came to Mount Lebanon in 1634 established numerous schools. The Lazarists set up the Antoura school in 1780, the first institution to impact secondary education. The Christian Brothers and Marist Fathers built schools in Beirut, Tripoli, Journieh and Damascus for the education of boys. Similarly, religious orders for women like the Ladies of Nazareth, Sisters of Charity of Besancon the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Saint Vincent de Paul were actively engaged in girls education. The French Cultural Mission eventually set up a cultural center and a Lycee, secondary school, in Beirut¹⁵.

In view of the deep and extensive relationship that existed between France and the Christian community of Syria and Lebanon, the events of 1860 caused considerable alarm in France. In August 1860 as

the massacre of Christians continued a French expeditionary force of 7,000 men landed in Beirut to defend the Maronites and other Christians¹⁶. The following year France along with other major European Powers (England, Russia, Prussia and Austria) forced the Ottoman to change the system of governance in Mount Lebanon into a new political arrangement known as “Mutasarrifiyah System”.

On 9 June, 1861, the representatives of the Five European Powers met with the representatives of the Ottoman Empire and signed the *Reglement Organique* (Constitutional Document) which called for the unification of Mount Lebanon and the creation of Semi-autonomous governorship. The governor or Mutasarrif was to be a non-Lebanese Christian designated by the Ottoman Sultan with the consent of the European Powers. The area’s special status was to be guaranteed by the European Powers¹⁷.

It should be noted that Maronite’s power and influence during the Mutasarrifiyah period grew steadily. The fundamental assumption underlying this new political arrangement was that while all the religious sects coexisted, the Maronites were dominant¹⁸. At the same time the formal guaranteed of the Five European Powers bolstered the tendency of the Maronites to rely on the West, particularly French with whom they now developed strong political, linguistic and cultural ties.

French became the cultural and literary language of the middle and upper classes and soon replaced Arabic in the house of many Lebanese Christians.

In the course of time, the Mutasarrifiyah came to be regarded as a Maronite national homeland by a majority of the Maronite Christians. However, an enterprising minority among them visualized the Mustasarrifiyah not as an end in itself but as a stepping-stone towards full Lebanese statehood. The borders of the Mustasarrifiyah were confined to Mount Lebanon. But in order to make the state economically viable it was imperative that it should have access to ports and suitable agricultural lands. Hence this minority argued that the Mutasarrifiyah's borders should be enlarged to include the Bikaa valley, Akkar plain, the coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and Southern Lebanon¹⁹. However, the Ottoman still directly administered these regions as separate districts. In order to realize the vision of an expanded Lebanon the Maronite Leadership, therefore, had to turn to their-long time ally France for help²⁰.

The outbreak of the First World War temporarily disrupted the Maronite plans for a separate state with extended boundaries. The Mutasarrifiyah system, which had given Mount Lebanon an autonomy and internationally recognized status within the Ottoman Empire came to

an end in 1915. Owing to military compulsions, the Ottoman authorities unilaterally abrogated the autonomous status of Mount Lebanon and placed it under the direct rule of an Ottoman military governor²¹.

World War I and the Defeat of the Ottoman Empire

With the outbreak of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire threw in her lot with Germany. The defeat of the Axis Powers in 1918 found the Ottoman Empire like the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a state of dissolution. The vast Arab dominion of the Turkish Empire was virtually at the mercy of the British and French conquerors. The new Turkish movement under the Kemalists led by the Kemal Ataturk had renounced all claims to these lands. The office of the Ottoman Caliph was abolished in 1924 bringing to an end the rule of the house of the Ottomans. The Arab territories were given away to the Mandatories on behalf of the League of Nations. The territories in question were mostly ceded by Germany and Turkey. Lebanon and Syria were ceded by the Ottoman Caliph. The mandates were divided into three classes, commonly known as "A", "B" and "C" mandates. The mandates were graded according to the stage of development they had achieved. The destination of the Arab territories had been settled during the war by a secret agreement between France and Great Britain. The mandate for Syria was assigned to France and the mandates for Iraq and for Palestine

and Transjordan were given to Great Britain. The French mandated territory was divided by the mandate itself into two: Syria and the Lebanon. In the Lebanon, a coastal strip on the confines of Syria and Palestine, a group of Arab Christians formed the majority of the population; and this territory enjoyed a republican form of government, which supported by periodical interventions of the mandatory power, continued to function. The Lebanese Christians, estranged, seemed content in spite of minor grievances, with the security assured to them by French protection.

In Syria, on the other hand, Arab nationalism proved as potent a force as in Iraq and Palestine. In Iraq, Great Britain created a unified state at the expense of the minorities. In Syria, France pursued the opposite policy, and excluded from Syria proper three areas inhabited mainly by non-Arabs. Two of these – Latakia on the coast, and the Jebel Druze territory in the south – were placed under direct French administration. The third – the Turkish district of Alexandretta in the north – became an autonomous province under the nominal suzerainty of the Syrian government.

With the end of the War the Maronite Christians once again revived their efforts for a separated state and extended frontiers. Their efforts acquired an added urgency because with the collapse of the

Ottoman Empire after its defeat in the War, the Maronites feared that in the political restructuring that would take place, Lebanon would be incorporated into a Pan-Arab Islamic State in which they would lose their autonomy which they had enjoyed under the Ottomans²². During 1919, therefore, various Maronite delegations, including one led by the Maronite Patriarch Elias Bots al-Howeik himself traveled to Paris and Versailles to plead for the creation of a separate state for themselves under French supervision.

The Muslim Arabs of Syria at whose expense Mount Lebanon was sought to be enlarged, however, were resolutely opposed to the Christian demand. Nationalist sentiments among them were running high. Immediately after the allied victory, Amir Faisal, son of Sharif Husain of Mecca who was Britain's wartime ally, had set up an Arab government in Damascus. Arab administration in Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli owing allegiance to Damascus had been established. Syrian nationalists wanted complete independence of geographical Syria, on the basis of British wartime pledges to Sharif Hussain contained in the Husain MeMohan correspondence. But the British had concurrently concluded secret Sykes- Picot Agreement with France, in May 1916, for dividing geographical Syria among themselves after the war. Very soon, in the wake of the conclusion of the agreement, General Henry H. Allen

by replaced the Arab administration in Beirut with a French Military Governor, whichever the Arabs of the coastal region had taken control in the name of the Damascus government, they were dislodged. In Sidon the Arabs put up a violent resistance and had to be quelled by force. He, then, divided geographical Syria into three parts. In the South, Palestine was placed under a British officer; in the North Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the northern coast lands were placed under a French officer and in the east, internal Syria and Transjordan, were place under an Arab Military Governor Syrian nationalist's vigorously protested the division of Syria and the imposition of British and French control. In March 1920 the Syrian National Congress met in Damascus and proclaimed the complete unity and independence of geographical Syria within which Mount Lebanon was to have an autonomous status. The British and French, however, refused to recognize this Greater Syria. The following months the Allied Supreme Council meeting at San Remo awarded France the mandate over Syria and Lebanon and Britain a mandate over Palestine and Transjordan. In July, French General Henri Joseph Eugene Gouraud sent an ultimatum to Faisal demanding immediate acceptance of the Mandate. When Faisal refused to comply with the ultimatum, he then captured Damascus and deposed Faisal²³.

Lebanon During the French Mandate

On 1 September, 1920, General Gouraud, now the French High Commissioner in Lebanon, officially declared the establishment of the Le Grand Liban (State of Greater Lebanon) (see Map-2) by adding to Mount Lebanon the coastal cities from Tripoli to Tyre, the regions around them and the Bikaa Valley²⁴. The long-standing Maronite vision of an enlarged Lebanon was now fulfilled.

The Creation of Greater Lebanon by France was not motivated by any kind of altruism nor was it solely the result of their concern for the Maronite community. France had its own imperial interests in the region and this could be best served by creating Le Grand Liban. Perhaps and the most important reason behind the French move was the desire to establish a permanent and loyal base in the Levant to act as a bastion against the rising Arab nationalism in its colonies, particularly in North Africa²⁵.

Where the expansion of Mount Lebanon marked the successful culmination of a long standing Maronite aspiration it also brought with it dramatic demographic changes. The Maronites who were in absolute majority (58.4%) in Mount Lebanon were reduced to the status of largest single sect in Greater Lebanon. According to the census

of 1932 the Maronites constituted approximately 29 percent of the population and all the Christians sects together constituted only 51.7 percent of the population even this thin majority was largely attained by including the Armenians who had settled in Lebanon after the First World War. In contrast, the Sunnis who had constituted only 3.5 percent of the population of Mount Lebanon now became the second largest sect in Greater Lebanon comprising 22 percent while the Shiites increased from 5.6 to 19.4 percent.

Comparison of the Population Distribution Between Mount Lebanon and Greater Lebanon

Table I

Ethnic and sectarian Factors in Mount Lebanon and Greater Lebanon

Ethnic and Religious Groups	Mount Lebanon Total population and percentage		Greater Lebanon Total Population and percentage	
Maronites	242308	58.4%	226378	28.6%
Greek Orthodox	53356	12.6	76522	9.6
Greek Catholic	31936	7.7	45999	5.8
Armenians	67	-	31156	3.9
Others (Including Jews)	2901	0.7	30191	3.8
Total Christians	329568	79.3	410246	51.7
Sunnis	14529	3.5	175925	22.2
Shiites	23413	5.7	154208	19.4
Druzes	47290	11.4	53047	6.7
Total Muslims	85232	20.5	383180	48.3
Grand Total	414800	99.99	793426	100.00

Source:

- (1) Micheal W. Suleiman, Political Parties in Labenon: The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture (New York, 1965), p. 18.
- (2) Arnon Soffer, Lebanon- Where Demography is the Core of Politics and life, Middle Eastern Studies (London), Vol.22, No. 2, April 1986, p. 199.

More important than this loss of overwhelming Christian majority was the fact that the inhabitants of the incorporated territories, who were predominantly Muslims, strongly resented their inclusion in Greater Lebanon. The Sunni Muslims in Particular had pronounced pan-Arab sympathies. They felt themselves as an integral part of the Arab world and many among them wished to see Lebanon become part of a large, powerful united Arab nation. Still others saw Lebanon as an integral part of Greater Syria. The Sunnis, therefore, came to regard Lebanon as an “artificial state” created by an imperialist power, in order to dominate the Arab World. In addition, their incorporation in Lebanon involved for the Sunnis a grave religious crisis and a powerful emotional blow. For the first time in history they were a minority in Christian State. They feared that their religion and culture would suffer in such a state. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that in the Ottoman Empire the Sunnis had constituted the ruling class. In Lebanon they would have had to live under the political hegemony of Christians whom they had always regarded as their inferiors. This question of secondary political status was the main grievance of the Sunnis through out the Mandate period and continues even till this day. The Shiite, and Druze also shared much of the Sunni sentiments. However, their opposition to Greater Lebanon was neither as strong nor as uniform as that of the Sunnis. Among the

Christians, only the Greek Orthodox, were anti Greater Lebanon. This was because of their fear of a Catholic Christian domination in Lebanon. Moreover, the Greek Orthodox had been influenced by Arab nationalism much more than other Christian sects²⁶.

The events of 1920 had left the Sunni Muslims in a state of shock. For some months to come, there was hardly any organized protest against the creation of Greater Lebanon. The first significant protest took place only in the summer of 1921 when the French were preparing to conduct a census. Sunni Muslims refused to participate on the grounds that they didn't recognize Greater Lebanon and denounced the census for differentiating between various Muslim sects as an imperialist device designed to divide the Muslims. Muslim protest intensified the following year. In April 1922, Khurshid Pasha, a high-ranking Muslim official in the Lebanese government, was assassinated by a secret Sunni organization in Beirut. The Assassination was aimed at deterring Muslims from collaborating with the French, who in order to enlist Sunni cooperation sometimes offered them lucrative government posts²⁷.

In 1925, in the midst of this Muslim agitation, the Druze of Jabal Druze in Syria rose up in revolt against the French. The Druze uprising quickly assumed a nationalist character as Syrian-Arab

nationalists rallied to its support. On 23 August, 1925 Sultan al-Atrash, the leader of the Druze uprising, issued a proclamation in his capacity as President of the Provisional National Government demanding complete unity of Syria and Lebanon and independence from French rule. The revolt soon spread to Lebanon and violent clashes between the Druze and Christians took place in many areas. A wave of intensive pro-Syrian agitation, unprecedented since 1920, engulfed Lebanon, with Muslims coming out in support of the Druze. Petitions were submitted to the French Government and the League of Nations, strikes were organized. And numerous public meetings were held against the French rule. As rebel activities intensified the French started distributing arms among the Christians and a campaign was conducted in the Christian press calling upon the Christians to assist the French in putting down the revolt. A force of Christian volunteers was quickly put together under the leadership of Botrus Karam²⁸, a Maronite from North Lebanon, and dispatched to the South to fight alongside the hard-pressed regular French army. By March the following year, the French troops with the help of Christian auxiliaries had been largely successful in putting down the revolt.²⁹ The role played by the Maronites in suppressing the revolt had grave implications for Christian-Muslim relations in Lebanon. Christian collaboration with the French was constructed by the Muslims as an act

of treason of the highest degree and for a long time to come, the Maronite Christians were regarded as traitors who opposed the national aspirations of the Arabs. Even today their role in suppressing the anti-French rebellion is sometimes recalled as an example of their deep-seated hatred for Arab and Arabism.

In May 1926, shortly after the suppression of the nationalist Druze uprising in Lebanon, a French-inspired constitution came into force. The purpose of this constitution (still in force today with some important modifications) was not so much to introduce responsible government in Lebanon as to secure for the Maronites a position of predominance in the political system. The constitution as per Maronite wishes declared that the boundaries of Greater Lebanon were immutable. Sunni Muslims all over Lebanon refused to take part in the drafting of the constitution in order to make it clear to the French authorities that they didn't support a Lebanese Republic separated and independent from Syria. Of the 210 questionnaires sent out by the Drafting Committee to representatives of the different communities in order to ascertain their views only 132 replied. Most of those who refused to reply were Sunni Muslims. Resolutely opposed not only to the present frontiers of Greater Lebanon but also to its independent existence, the Muslims could not

have been expected to take part in the making of a constitution which was a very symbol of all that they had rejected.³⁰

Of particular importance in the constitution that came into force in 1926 was Article 95, which reads:

As a provisional measure and for the sake of justice and concord the communities shall be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the cabinet such measures, however, not to cause prejudice to the general welfare of the state.³¹

According to the new constitution the Lebanese had to elect their own Head of State. The Maronites were determined that someone from their community should be made President. However, the French proposed the name of Charles Dabbas who they thought would be more acceptable to the Muslims than a Maronite candidate. Dabbas consequently became the first President under the new constitution. However, in 1932, when a Sunni Muslim, Muhammad al Jisr, announced his intention to run for the Presidency, the French announced his intention to run for the Presidency, the French immediately intervened to prevent him from contesting. Instead, Habib Pasha, a Maronite, was elected as President. Since then, the powerful Presidency had remained the exclusive preserve of the Maronites. As a concession to the Muslims, the

French started the convention of reserving the much weaker post of Prime Minister for the Sunni from 1937 onwards.

Muslim agitation for union with Syria didn't cease even after the promulgation of the constitution in 1926. It continued intermittently during the next few years reaching its peak in the mid-1930s in response to the resurgence of militant nationalism in Syria. In April 1935 the largely Sunni taxi drivers of Beirut went on a strike. After some violent incident Riad al-Solh, a leading nationalist figure was exiled to the Jazira region³² in Syria. In March 1936, Salim Ali Salam convened the famous Conference of the coast in Beirut, which demanded the return of the annexed territories to Syria, and in July the Mufti of Lebanon, along with leading Muslim leaders, set up Muslim Consultative Council with strong pro-Syrian sympathies. Muslim-Christian relations rapidly deteriorated from mid 1936 onwards culminating at the year's end in large-scale countrywide riots.

While the Muslims were demanding Lebanon's unity with Syria, Maronite and other Catholics Christians busied themselves with the developing historical, cultural and even geographical arguments aimed at demonstrating the special nature of Lebanon and justifying its existence as an entity separate from the rest of the Arab World. Phoenicianism was

the attempt to trace the ancestry of Lebanon to the Phoenician civilization, which existed some five thousand years ago. Its chief proponent was a Maronite intellectual Charles Corm whose main aim was to show that the Lebanese have very little in common with the Arabs. Mideterreanism whose prophet was Greek Catholic, Michel Chiha didn't stress the historical origins of Lebanon but sought to link Lebanon's physical and cultural origins to the Mediterranean basin. Its intent, therefore, was very similar to Phoenicianism.³³

Independence of Lebanon, the Lebanese National Pact

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 had far reaching consequences for Lebanon, France, the traditional protector of Maronites came under Nazi occupation in June 1940. When France surrendered, the Vichy regime sent its officials to administer the Levant and Axis influence became widespread. Numerous German and Italian officers came to the region in an attempt to turn it into a base for anti-Allied activities.³⁴ The danger of a German domination of the Levant moved the British to join forces with the Free French under *General Charles De Gaulle* and launch an invasion of Syria and Lebanon. On 8 June, 1941, British and Free French forces invaded Syria and Lebanon from Palestine. Leaflets dropped from Allied aircraft proclaimed the

independence of Syria and Lebanon.³⁵ Once Lebanon and Syria were occupied by the joint forces of British and Free French, General de Gaulle was no more eager than previous French government to surrender France's position in the Levant. However, the British who had occupied the Levant during the First World War and then handed it to France, were determined to repeat this again. Britain was then busy promoting the concept of Arab unity in the form of the Arab League through which it hoped to secure its own interests in the region after the war. French presence in Syria and Lebanon was, therefore, incompatible with such a policy.³⁶

The significance of the new developments was not lost upon the Maronite community. A section of them correctly assessed that it was just not possible to establish a Christian state in Lebanon without the backing of French power. A moderate group advocating pragmatism gradually came to the forefront of Maronite leadership. This group, which was led by Bishara al-Khoury, felt the urgent necessity of cooperating nationalist Muslim leaders into the political power structure and winning their confidence in order to preserve the viability and dependence of Greater Lebanon.³⁷ Khoury, therefore, offered to cooperate with Muslim leaders in their struggle to throw out the French. The response of the Muslim leaders was positive. After years of fruitless agitation many had

resigned themselves to the existence of Greater Lebanon and in Khoury's offer they saw at least an opportunity to end the much hatred of French rule. Secondly, many among them feared that failure to cooperate with Khoury would only strengthen his archrival, the rapidly anti-Arab Emile Edde who was secretly negotiating with the French for the establishment of a purely Christian state in Mount Lebanon. Finally, many Sunni Muslim politicians and officials thought it preferable to hold on to the influential positions they had already achieved within Greater Lebanon than to play a minor role in a large Syrian state whose power center would inevitably lie in Damascus rather than Beirut.³⁸

Under pressure from Britain, the Gaullists were forced to hold free election during the summer of 1943, which resulted in a victory for Khouri's Constitutional Block Party over Emile Edde's National Block Party. Khoury was elected President of the Republic on 21 September 1943. After the victory one of his first acts as President was to conclude a verbal agreement with the popular Sunni Prime Minister, Riad-al-Solh which came to be known as the National Pact. The Pact laid down that Lebanon was to be a completely independent sovereign state in which the Christians would not seek foreign protection or try to bring Lebanon under foreign control.³⁹ Likewise the Muslims would not try to bring Lebanon into any political union with Syria or into any form of

Arab union. In relation to the Arab World Lebanon was to regard itself as an Arab state with a “special character” and cooperate fully with it, provided it recognized its sovereignty. Despite its Arabism, however, Lebanon would retain its cultural ties with the West. The Pact further laid down that public offices in Lebanon were to be distributed equitably among the recognized sects and that the President of the Republic should belong to the Maronite community and Prime Minister to the Sunni Muslim community.⁴⁰ This verbal agreement was followed by a unilateral declaration of independence by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, which met on 8 November 1943 and amended the constitution so as to eliminate all mandatory restrictions. The more militant elements in the Maronite community like the Church and the Lebanese Phalanges⁴¹ (Katib al Lubnamiyah), however, were at best only lukewarm towards the national Pact. They still entertained the narrow and parochial notion of Lebanon as a Christian homeland and continued to seek allies outside the Arab World. It was no wonder, therefore, that these parochial groups resolutely opposed Lebanon’s membership of the Arab league in 1944. Regarding the Arab League as indeed leading to Arab unity, these groups began to consider very strongly the matter of making Lebanon a “National Home” for the Christians.⁴²

Furthermore, the National Pact 1943 provided for sectarian balance and sectarian fraternity. It bridged the gap between the two wings of Lebanon, and provided a compromise formula for the distribution of political power among the various sects, in a multi-confessional society, within the framework of a liberal parliamentary democracy. The Pact balanced divergences among the Lebanese. Whereas the Muslims had looked predominantly towards the Arabs for linkage and identity, the Christians had looked towards the West. The compromise reaped was to give up both indications. and to belong to an independent, sovereign Lebanon with an Arab face, that is, no merger with the Arab national environment, and no dependence on Western protection.

Syria during the French mandate up to its Independence

The French interrupted the first steps of Syria towards independence and unity by putting an end to Faisal's reign. They reduced the areas of historic Syrian *vilayets* by incorporating into Lebanon the Tripoli, Bikka and Sidon districts in 1920 and by surrendering the Sanjag of Alexandretta to Turkey in 1938. The mandatory government also weakened the political centrality of Damascus and the territorial unity of the country by reviving, and even enlarging, regional divisions and strengthening marginal centrifugal focus. Thus at the beginning of the

1920s, the French divided Syria into four states: Damascus, Aleppo and the Alawi and Druze states. The Jazira region was also administered separately, and Alexandretta failed any tendencies towards Syrian National Unity and increased international contrasts by encouraging for example, polarization in – the education system.

The abolition by the French in 1920 of Faisal's Syrian Arab Kingdom caused a crucial setback in the process of the creations of a political community in Syria. Nevertheless, feelings of Syria's identity didn't slacken among members of the Syrian-Arab national movement. Under the French mandate these feelings were in fact fostered with the formation by the French of separate Syrian political units and local government institutions, cabinet, parliament, etc. These feelings were also enhanced by the Arab national movement's struggle for Syria's independence.⁴³

In Damascus Arab nationalism was led by educated, wealthy Muslims who had earlier supported Faisal. Their grievances against the French were many, but chief among them was French suppression of newspapers, political activity, and civil rights and the division of Syria into several political units. They also objected to French reluctance to frame a constitution for Syria that would provide for the eventual

sovereignty that the League of Nations mandate had ordered. When the Iraqis gained an elected assembly from the British in March 1924, Syrian Arabs became even more distressed. Then, the French on February 9, 1925, permitted the nationalist to form the people party. Led by Faris al Khuri, the nationalists demanded French recognition of eventual Syrian independence, unity of the country, more stress on education, and the granting of civil liberties.

The French were painfully aware that the unfolding Syrian Arab political ferment was unfavorable to their presence. This ferment had already led to the creation, in December 1912, of a Reform Committee for the vilayet of Beirut with a membership of 42 Muslims, 40 Christians and 2 Jews. In turn they appointed a sub-committee of 12 Muslims, 12 Christians and 1 Jew to draw up a program of changes which if was hoped the Ottoman government would implement.⁴⁴

In 1928 the French allowed the formation of the National Bloc (Al-Katahal Wataniyah), composed of the several of nationalist groups centered in Damascus. The nationalist alliance was headed by Hananu and Hashim al Atasi and included leading members of large landowning families. One of the most extreme groups in the national Bloc was the Istiqlal (Independence) party, a descendant of the old AL-Fatah

secret society of which Shukri al Kuwatly was a member. Elections of that year for a constituent assembly put the National Bloc in power, and Hananu set out to write a constitution. When completed, it provided for the reunification of Syria and ignored the authority of the French. In 1930 the French imposed the constitution minus the articles, which would have given Syria unified self-government.

Syrian nationalists continued to assert that they should at least have a treaty with France setting forth French aims. Britain and Iraq had signed such a treaty in 1922. Unrest after the death of the nationalist leader Hananu at the end of 1935, followed by a general strike in 1936, brought new negotiations for such a treaty, under Leon Blum's liberal-socialist government in France, the two countries worked out the Syrian-French treaty of Alliance in 1936. The French parliament never ratified the treaty, yet a feeling of optimism prevailed in Syria as the first nationalist government came to power, with Atasi as President.

During 1937, France allowed the return of the Jabal Druze and Latakia to the Syrian state and turned over many local government functions to the Syrian Government. French administration during the previous years had given some advantage to the Syrians. It had built modern cities in Damascus and Aleppo, roads and schools throughout

much of the country, and it had partially trained some Syrians as minor bureaucrats. French cultural influence spread in the schools in the press, and even in the style of dress; social and economic conditions slowly improve.

During the course of the Syrian – French treaty discussion in 1937, Turkey had asked for reconsideration of the situation in Hatay – at that time the Syrian province of Alexandretta – which had a large Turkish minority and already had been given a special administrative system under the France –Turkish Agreement of Ankara (Sometimes called the Franklin – Bouillon Agreement) in 1921. The case was submitted to the League of Nation, which decided in 1937 that Alexandretta should be a separate, self –governing political state direct negotiation between Turkey and France ended on July 13, 1939, France agreeing to absorption of Alexandretta by Turkey. Disturbances broke out in Syria against France and the Syrian government, which Syrian leaders felt had not adequately defended their interests. Syrian President Atasi resigned, parliamentary institutions were abolished, and France ruled an unruly Syria through the Council of Directors. Latakia and the Jabal Druze were again set up as separate units. The French government officially declared it would not submit the Syrian – French treaty to the French Chamber of Deputies for ratification.

Although the country seemed on the way to peace and prosperity, Syrians continued to demand freedom for the foreign rule and a rejuvenation of Arab society. The French leader, General Charles de Gaul, declared that so far as he was concerned the mandate would remain in existence until a new French government legally brought it to an end. Syrians elected a new parliament in 1943 with the National Bloc in control; the parliament elected Kuwatly as President of Syria. During 1944 the Syrian government took over the functions of fourteen administrative departments, which since 1920 had been under direct French control. These included those dealing with customs, social affairs, excise taxes, control of concessionary companies and supervision of tribes. France kept control of social cultural and educational services as well as the special Troops of the Levant. Despite French opposition, the Soviet Union in July and the United States in September 1944 granted Syrian and Lebanon Unconditional recognition as sovereign states; British recognition followed a year later. These Allied nations brought pressure on France to evacuate Syria.

In January 1945 the Syrian government announced the formation of a national army and in February declared war on the Axis. In March the country became a charter member of the United Nations; an indication of its status as a sovereign nation and in April affirmed its

allegiance to the idea of Arab unity by signing the pact of the League of Arab States.

The way in which the French left Syria increased their already embittered feelings the Syrians had for France. Demanding that cultural, economic and strategic interests be protected by treaty before agreeing to withdrawal of the Special Troops of the Levant, France refused to budget. In May 1945 demonstrations occurred in Damascus and Aleppo and for the third time in twenty years the French bombed and machine-gunned the ancient capital. Serious fighting broke out in Homs and Hamah as well. Only after Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, threatened to send troops to Damascus did General de Gaulle order a cease-fire. The following year France started withdrawing its troops and by mid-April all French troops were off Syrian soil. On April 17, Syria celebrated Evacuation Day; the date continues to be a national holiday.

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26. An exchange of letter between, Britain, France and Russia in October 1916 finalised the pact. It was December 1917 by the Bolshevik regime in Russia, which published it in the official newspaper, Izvestia (News).

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the Baghdad and Basra Provinces of Mesopotamia: French hegemony in Ottoman Syria and Lesser Armenia; and international zone in Palestine, much smaller than the Palestine Mandated to Britain in 1922. The rest was to be consisted into an independent, Arab state of federation, divided into British and French sphere of influence.

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CHAPTER - 2

CHAPTER-II

Syria's Policy During The Lebanese Civil War 1975-1976

Syria had become an independent country, free of the hated French domination and free also to shape its own destiny. As a member of the Arab world the newly created Syrian state joined the other Arab states in their war to exterminate the newly created state of Israel. Internally one of Syria's basic problems was its need to define its own nationhood.

It has been pointed out that "Syrian" is a modern entity and a modern concept. The idea of Syria as a nation – as a separate entity – was first formulated in the second half of the nineteenth century by Syrian and Lebanese Christians. As members of non-Muslim communities in a Muslim world they had a privileged but inferior status. The idea of nationalism therefore meant, to them, that they could claim equal citizenship and status with Muslims in a modern nation-state. They were the first to propound the doctrine of secular nationalism; of a state in which the basis of identity was language and culture and not religion and community. The Lebanese Christians in particular played a very important role in the founding and development of Arabic literature and

many Christians in Syria and Lebanon became the first leaders and intellectuals of the nationalist movements in the Arab world as a whole. There was place for separate ethnic and cultural groups in this state, but, as in the days of the old caliphate, the state itself had to be Islamic and had to extend over the whole of the Arab world.

During their struggle against the French, certain groups had come to have vested interests in the French-created political unit called Syria. These vested interests were a strong force in prodding Syria's Muslim nationalists to call for Syria's unification and independence, but even these interests were not free of the dominant ideology of pan-Arab nationalism or of allegiance to their own particular community in the many internal divisions within the Syrian population. To the individual Syrian, loyalty to this family, religious community, tribe and locality was far more important than loyalty to a state. In the 1940s and even to the mid-1960s the country's political and economic life was still dominated by a small, mostly Sunni elite whose members lived in Aleppo and Damascus. The Sunni landlords had large estates, which were worked by a heterodox peasantry. In general, the Sunni majority tended to regard the Christian and heterodox Muslim groups as "imperfect Arabs," an attitude that still affects the country's minority groups today.

Inside Syria, Hafez's al-Assad's Ba'th government proclaimed a new constitution and began to implement a policy of nationalizing banks and factories and distributing land to the peasants. Merchant and landowner riots and protest demonstrations were brutally put down.

In 1965, the party's moderate, civilian wing ousted the members of the rival military wing from their positions and began to carry out purges. The military wing staged a coup in February 1966 and arrested the old leadership. Among those put in prison were 'Aflaq, Bitar and General Amin al-Hafez.

The new leaders of Syria were two Alawite Ba'thist Generals: Salah Jadid, who was supported by the regional Syrian Ba'th and Hafez Assad, Commander of the Air Force and Minister of Defence – and the two soon became rivals.

In October 1968, the group led by general Hafez al-Assad gained the upper hand. The group's aim was to reduce Syria dependence upon the Soviet Union, to improve relations with the other Arab states and to renew the war against Israel.

Assad and his nationalists began arresting the communists and making changes in the government. Assad had virtually taken control

of the government in February 1969 in a kind of semi-coup, but Syria's continued dependence on Soviet military and economic aid – and also Egyptian pressure – had forced him to accept a compromise and the continued participation of the leftist faction in the government. The regime also tried to meddle in the relations between the Palestinian organizations and the governments of Lebanon and Jordan.

General Assad completed his takeover of the Syrian government in November, 1970. His first step was to arrest all his opponents. A 173-member "People's Council" was convened in February, 1971. The Council nominated Assad as President of the Republic. He was endorsed that same month in a plebiscite (in which he was the only candidate). Assad's first move was to mend Syria's relations with the other Arab states, and especially with Egypt.

President Assad has given Syria its most stable government in decades. He is also the first Syrian statesman in the modern era who appeared to be succeeding in drawing the whole population together by striving to transcend communal and party differences.

Assad's Regime:

Hafiz al-Assad who was born in Qardaha near Hadhiqiya in the Latakia was of a poor peasant Alawi family in 1928. Assad became a professional officer in the Syrian Air Force. In the 1950s, he joined the clandestine officers cells linked to the Baath Party. He took a leading part in the coup of March 1963 that brought the Baath officers to power and became commander of the Air Force in 1968. Assad was a member of the Baath High Command, both the "National", i.e., al-Arab, and the "regional" Syrian one.¹ As a member of a minority he had to face decisions which did not affect members of majorities. He could either mingle with his fellows in an attempt to avoid discrimination or persecution, or he could break out in an attempt to make himself successful and even indispensable in the world of the majority. He chose the latter course and entered the one institution, which promised promotion on merit – the army².

Growing up under the French, Assad like many politically minded students didn't avoid being drawn into anti-French activities. In the 1940s his political awakening coincided with the birth of the Baath Party. Its ideas of nationalism and secularism attracted members of

minorities. Its founder was after all a Christian. Assad joined the Homs Military Academy in 1951 as an avenue of advancement.

Assad was beginning his tenure of power after departure of the greatest Arab leader, Jamal Abd al-Nasser, on 28 September, 1970. Assad's primary task on taking over in 1970 was to establish some stability in the regime³.

On November 13, 1970, General Hafez al-Assad and the military leadership faction of the Baath Party seized power from the ruling civilian radical trend, in contrast to the hard-line posture of the predecessor regime – itself the product of an earlier division in the Baath Party. Internally, Assad's coming to power marked a relaxation in the political atmosphere. He was elected President for a seven-year term in February 1971. A new Regional Command of the Baath was formed of Assad supporters and the old leaders were removed from their posts. In mid-1971 Assad's government was continuing in its announced determination to reduce Syrian isolation, especially in the Arab world; to govern through a so-called progressive national front and to build a base of support among the people at large; to strengthen what it called the front against Israel and continue assistance to the Palestinian guerrilla

movements; and to stimulate the economy and reduce public restrictions⁴.

During the balance of 1970 and the first three months of 1971, Assad and his cabinet moved rapidly to continue improvement of the country's internal and external posture and, in the process, to implement the promises made at the time of their assumption of power. Security restrictions were relaxed; more than 200 political prisoners were released, including amnesty for a group of former supporters of Hafez; and measures such as an increase in family welfare allowances and a reduction in the price of sugar, rice and tea were adopted⁵.

The establishment of the People's Council was announced in Damascus on February 13, 1971, as promised exactly three months after the overthrow of the Jadid regime by Assad's faction on November 13, 1970. Announcements released between February 13 and 17, 1971, described the People's Council as consisting of 173 members, with this allocation: Baath Party, 85 seats; the Socialist Unionist Movement, 12 Arab Socialist Union, 12 Arab socialists, 8 Communists, 8 and the balance of 48 to "Popular Organizations", including trade and labour unions, professional federation, representatives of industrial enterprises, and the senior Islamic clergy. The three categories of membership under

which the Regional Command organized the council were thus proportioned with 49 percent of the seats to Assad's Baath Party, 23 percent to the "Progressive Forces", and 28 percent to the "Popular Organizations"⁶.

The two main responsibilities of the People's Council, Assad said, were legislation and the formulation of a permanent constitution. First, however, it was constitutionally required that the council nominates the President of the republic and submit this nomination to approval of the electorate by referendum. Assad was nominated March 2 and, in the referendum held March 12, received approval by 99.2 percent of the vote⁷.

On April 3, 1971, President Assad issued a decree forming a new cabinet with Major General Abdul Rahman Khulayfawi as Prime Minister and twenty-seven ministers, of whom two were designated as deputy Prime Ministers in addition to holding specific portfolios. This cabinet was broadly based, with Assad Baathists predominating, and was essentially an extension of the preceding interim cabinet. Baath Party regional elections were scheduled to be held in May 1971 in order to reestablish the Regional Command structure and thus complete the legitimization of the Assad faction's control of government and party.

Assad's policies, in theory, aim to achieve national unity through the creation of a popular democracy, granting civil liberties and building on the original socialist reforms of the Baath revolution. The organs used to implement these goals would be the National Progressive Front led by the Baath Party, and the People's Assembly, as well as various other popular organizations. They would foster civil liberties and socialist measures while mobilizing the people to unity and to dedicate their energies to the Syrian homeland. A unified Syrian people would in turn constitute a solid basis for pan-Arab unity and for the struggle against Zionism, imperialism and reactionary Arab regimes⁸. However, beyond these theoretical and rhetorical statements aimed at demonstrating his commitment to Baath doctrines, Assad's first priority was to establish a basis of popular legitimacy for his regime.

Assad's regime at first emphasized a new "openness" in its internal policies – a slightly more liberal economic policy and an effort to associate certain non-Baath but "Socialist- Unionist" factions with the regime. A new, permanent Constitution was passed by the People's Council in January 19 and endorsed by a plebiscite in March. It defined "Syrian Arab Republic" as a "popular-democratic and socialist" state, "Part of the Arab homeland", and its people as "part of the Arab nation,

struggling for the realization of its total unity". Islamic Law (the Shariah) was to be the "Principal base of legislation"⁹.

Elections for the People's Council were duly held in May 1973 – the first general elections since 1961, and again in 1977, 1981, 1986, 1990 and 1994. Towards the 1973 elections, the Baath Party set up, in March 1972, a "National Progressive Front" with the Communists and several "Socialist Unionist" factions prepared to accept Baath guidance and primacy. Candidates usually appeared on behalf of that "Front", most of them Baath men, but independent candidates were not ruled out.

Background of the Lebanese Conflict

Background of the Lebanese conflict was apparently rooted from the Lebanese socio-economic and political structure. The determinate of its conflict had been known that came from the internal factors responsible to the Civil War in the Lebanon during 1975 and 1976. These factors were basically responsible in dividing the Lebanese people into different groups; many polarizing camps, and leading up to situation of civil war in Lebanon.

These internal factors can be divided as follows.

(1) The Fragmentation of Social Structure in Lebanon

(2) The Sectoral Division of Lebanese Population

(3) The Rigidity of the Political System in Lebanon

These three factors were complex and multidimensional.

The interactions of these three factors had effected into the polarizing camps and leading the country into civil war in mind-seventies

The Fragmentation of Social Structure in Lebanon

Dominant characteristic features of the fragmented social structure in Lebanese society are as follows: A multiplicity of religious sects in Lebanon accommodating their own conflicts and interest within the limitation of system that tends to promote sectarian identities and acts as a barrier to social integration¹⁰.

(1) Legitimizing of Sectarials Differences

Republic of Lebanon has given official recognition to seventeen different sects. These are the Maronites, Greek Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Eastern Nestorians, Chaldeans, Evangelicals. Latins, Sunnis,

Shiites, Druze, Alawis, Ismailis and Jews¹¹ (see Map-3). Separation of religious sects in Lebanon from the state would naturally secure its social structure. But over the years, religious identity has always been a major focus of debate in contemporary Lebanon. According to Albert Hourani has written: "The primary divisions sides the Near East are, as they have been for over thousands year, religious: whether a man is Muslim, Christian, or Jewish community he belong to¹²" The fact about this statement is more apparently in Lebanon than else where

The officially recognized sect is legally permitted to have its own legislative courts and councils. For instance, the Maronites and the Greek Catholic, being recognized by the Pope in Rome as an ultimate authority. Likewise the Greek Orthodox Church has its head quarters in Damascus and not in Lebanon.¹³ As a result of these self definition and self identification that the Lebanese sense of citizenship was determined by religious affiliation and that Lebanese religious sentiments and commitments superseded loyalty to the country.¹⁴

Wadi D. Haddad reinforces this view by saying that:

"Today' Arab nationalist may be tomorrow's Maronite. Today's Secularist, Socialist may be tomorrow's Shia cleric; today's Arab nationalist may be today's Maronite".¹⁵

(2) Geographical Concentration of Different Religious Sects

The various sects tend to be concentrated in specific regions as well as they tend to live in separate neighborhoods. The distribution of various some important sects living in different district are as follows:¹⁸ Zghorta, Batrun and Asruwan are Maronite districts, whereas Jezzín, Meth and Baadba are Maronite majority districts. The Sunni community, which was concentrated in Beirut and in the region of Tripoli in North Lebanon.¹⁹ The Shiites are in the districts of Tyre, Baalbeck, Hermel, Saida and Marjayum; the Greek Orthodox in Koura and Greek Catholic majority living in the districts Zahleh and Baalbek. The Druze constitute about half of the districts of Aleh, one third of Rashaya, and a quarter of Shuf and Meth.²⁰

In many towns and many cities where more than one religious group is present, each group tends to live in its own neighbourhood. The large-scale migration from North to South, from rural to urban areas that had taken place later on. Many moved from North and settled in many towns around Beirut. In addition to their old frustration, this migration involved the new experience of living in a large and difficult metropolitan area. Likewise, the large-scale migration had created the problems and tensions for various sects, particularly

between Christians and Muslims. Many central districts of Beirut has shown that urbanization has not been associated with a large measure of decline or weakening of traditional ties and communal attachment.²¹ This geographical concentration of different sects has been “a formidable obstacle to developing a positive national consensus particularly since the outlying regions are predominantly Muslim.”²²

Then, the geographical representation of different sects also reflects and reinforces the fragmented nature of the social structure in Lebanon.

3. Absence of Unified Educational System.

The absence of unified educational system in Lebanon reflects and reinforces the fragmented social structure of Lebanon as well. Primarily of Lebanese educational system depending on philosophies and doctrines of different religious communities, each sects has its own autonomous private schools without any controlled by the government. This plurality of educational system has become more complicated as a result of the development of Catholic and Protestant missionary educational.²³

The curricular also classified that Arabic instruction for Muslim but Christian curricular using the western languages: French and

English. On the other hand they tend to perpetuate the existing sectarian cleavages.²⁴

Lacking of the unity of national educational system “political socialization” function of the education i.e. to work toward a national consensus has been a failure in the main.²⁵ And also the multiplicity of educational systems has prevented the emergence of a united intelligentsia.²⁶

The traditional religious loyalties being the most important role in the way of life of an individual as a feature consequence of the fragmentation of Lebanese society. Lebanese people participate in public affairs through their respective communities only. As an effectiveness of interaction between Lebanese citizen through their religious communities that it has influenced to their social and political consciousness. They tend to look at the world from the point of view of their community.²⁷ Thus, the fragmented character of Lebanese citizen leading to many fundamental problems such as constitution, a popular national pact, political order, and the most important is the national solidarity of Lebanon. Obviously, the social fragmentation itself would not be able to bring a civil war in Lebanon. But there are many factors which have contribute and reinforced to the violent encounter of various sects in

Lebanon. And one of its many factors is the Emergence of Sharp Class Division.

THE EMERGENCE OF SHARP CLASS DIVISION:

Instead of integrating various sects more firmly, the economic development in Lebanon after 1944 had different impact on the Christians and Muslim. The economic development resulted class divisions which emerged broadly coincided with the religious divisions. Before independence, the Christians were dominating in emerging areas of service sector like banking, transport, managerial services, communication, tourism, hotels etc.

Prior to the French mandate, the Christians were already established in export and import. After French mandate, Lebanon rapidly became an entrepot and western goods and raw material exported to Europe. Slowly and gradually the Christians emerged capitalist and along with French mandatory authorities who protected French capitalist interests, because the ruling class of Lebanon.²⁸

Thus at the time of independence Christians were the most powerful economic group in Lebanon and members of ruling class by and large were from Christian group. The French had arisen with the

growth of western investment in Lebanon. Due to the knowledge of the language of the foreigners they were favoured.²⁹

After independence, the economic position of Christian has further enhanced because of the two reasons. Firstly, the Lebanese economic system was based on extreme freedom to private enterprise and secondly the creation of Israel in 1948 as one of the most important amongst external factors. As a result of the creation of Israel, Lebanon inherited all of Palestine regional economic functions due to the Arab boycott of Israel. The Arab boycott gave a boost of Beirut port and the Beirut International Airport as well as an added appeal to the Lebanese schools and hospitals for Palestinian and Transjordanian students and patients.

The Iraq Petroleum Company had used Haifa in Palestine as an outlet for petroleum export until May 1948. Later on Tripoli in Lebanon chose its new outlet, upon the stoppage of the flow of oil through Israel. Similarly ARAMCO used south Lebanon as an outlet for part of it, Saudi oil export by building a pipeline in 1957 from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon via Jordan and Syria.³⁰ Around 150000 Palestinian refugees were forced to take refuge in Lebanon which offered cheap labour and as a result of this many banking and other service were shifted

from Jerusalem to Beirut. This labour force was not covered by state labour legislation and social security.³¹

The post war oil boom gave a boost to the service sector in Arabian peninsula and the gulf. The large flow of foreign currency had given spurt to the development of financial enterprising, financial help the Lebanese firms and resulted vast sum in Beirut money market. But the majority of the banks and financial enterprises were in the hands of Christians and investments were made to the industrial, agricultural, commercial and construction enterprises of the same community only.

In 1968, the contribution of service sector was 67% where as only 32% labour force was employed in this sector. The contribution of industry and agriculture was 22% and 11% respectively. At the same time 50% of the population derived their income from agriculture. With this it is clear that agriculture was neglected where mostly Lebanese Muslim were engaged. The regional inequality was going northward, which can be proved with the fact that the rural per capita income was \$ 166 per year while that of the urban elite was \$ 2680 in the 1960. The most prosperous sector the Lebanese economy remained by a large Christian preserve. In case of industry the position of Muslims was

slightly better but here too it was the Christian community which dominated.

As a result of uneven development of the economy there has been a steady flow of Muslim migrants from rural to the urban areas in search of jobs. The population of Beirut, rose from 2,50,000 in the early 1950's to 14 million in 1975 when the Lebanese Civil War started. The migration of Muslim from rural to urban continued until the reveal population was pared down from 65% of the total population at the times the Civil War started. The migration was partly the result of the development in agriculture of export oriented fruits and vegetable farming. It also required intensive cultivation and greater investment of capital. As a result urban capitalist cause to reveal areas by means of ownership of fruit and vegetable orchards or by control of marketing of the produce of such farms. This development led to majority of Shia and Sunni farmers migrated to cities in search of their livelihood. From 1970 onwards, these migrants were joined by another kind of migrants still Muslim fleeing their homes to escape the death and destruction caused by devastating Israeli raids into south Lebanon.

With the passage of time two poverty belts inhabited predominantly by Muslim sprang up in Lebanon. One surrounding

country itself and one surrounding by the Christian. The economic growth in Lebanon came from the private sector, the public sector remained relatively small and inefficient. As a result social institutions and services of Lebanon fell below par. Due to the dominant role of private sector in the field of education, health and housing. These sources were expensive for poor people and mostly Christians were availing these highly paid services. This imbalance in educational opportunities between Christians and Muslims has led to further economic disparities. This analysis of the development in Lebanese economy and its impact on the religious sects clearly highlight the economically deteriorating positions of the Muslim section of the population and strengthening of the economic position of the Christian community.

The family income of the Christians averaged about 50% to higher than those of Muslim and same two-third higher than those of Shia Muslims. This does not mean that there were no prosperous Muslim or poor Christians in Lebanon. The rich Muslim tended to mix up with their counterparts in the Christian community due to their common economic interests. The class polarization that took place between rich Christian and poor Muslim has simply a conflict of the interest among social classes and came to take on a sectarian and communal colour.³²

This class conflict was highlighted by the brief civil war of 1958. The feeling among Muslim was that their socio-economic condition deteriorated that of the Christians since independence and further government was not doing anything to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. After the civil war of 1958, the new President Fuad Shihab tried to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth among the Christians and Muslim but did not give justified result. The Litani river project launched for ameliorating poor Muslim peasantry of south Lebanon.³³ By 1974 the dam and the power station had been completed and Beirut was getting its electricity but there was hardly any sign of the irrigation programme.

To change the structure of the Lebanese economy would have led to clash with the powerful business community that controlled and benefited from the service sector. To shifting of the concentration from business and service sector to agriculture could have infringed on the established rights of Christian business community in Lebanon. So all the efforts from the times of Shihab to regulate the economy have been resisted by powerful Christian oligarchy on the ground that country would lead to socialism. The same line of development was taking place in Arab countries which had adopted socialist principles of development.

RIGIDITY OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Lebanese political system was proved flexible in allowing for free enterprise in the economic sphere, but it provide rigid in its resistance to political system. The Lebanese Muslim had principal demands of allocating parliamentary, cabinet and administrative posts on the basis of sects, which was based on the French sponsored census of 1932 did not reflect the true demographic situation, hence it had to be changed. This change was demanded as the size of different sects had under gone tremendous change as a result of Christians migration to West and higher fertility rate of the Muslims especially Shiite.

In 1958, change was effected in the appointment to civil services due to the pressure from the Muslims. The ratio of the Muslim was not ever 5 to 6 in the civil services. Maronite Christians who had around 29% of the population in 1958, had held approximately 50% of government posts. After 1958, it was laid down by the government that our Muslim had to be appointed for every Christian but this policy was not extended to the field of political representation. Since the religious ratio has changed in favour of the Muslims, the Christian elites have refused to allow a new census. The new census was supposed to unseat Maronites Christian from the near monopoly power.

In Lebanon the political movement which could have cut across sectarian. The political system in Lebanon proved rigid in not allowing Muslim a greater share in state power which they claimed on the basis of demographic setup. This led to further political alienation of the Muslim since the Muslim had resented for their minority status within Lebanon since the time of independence, even though all evidences pointed to the contrary. Second, the system proved rigid is not accommodating political forces that arose after independence. The inevitable outcome of this was the emergence of extra constitutional sources of authority. All these factors only served to weaken the state and its institution at a time when the Lebanese society was in need of a strong central authority to control the social flux triggered by rapid development and modernisation.

CIVIL WAR AND SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION

First phase of the civil war:

On the morning of Sunday, 13 April 1975, while Pierre Gemayel was attending the consecration of a new Maronite church in the Christian suburb of Ayn al-Rummana, a car broke through the security line and shots were fired in the direction of the church entrance, three were shot them, two of them members of the Katiab militia and one bodyguard of

Gemayel. The car managed to escape in the confusion. On the same morning, one group of Palestinian from various refugee camps were returning by bus after attending a commando parade. Twenty passengers were killed and twenty other injured in an ambush by gunmen of the Kataib militia as they passed through Ayn Al – Rummana.³⁴ These two incidents led heavy fighting between Katiab militiamen and Palestinian. The armed Shiite militiamen joined the side of Palestinian. Leaders of the PLO and Fath organization however, refrained from allying themselves openly with the Palestinians and Shiite who were fighting the Katiab forces. On the second day of fighting Mahmud Riyad, the Secretary General of the Arab League, mediated and a ceasefire agreement was concluded. But the sporadic fighting continued in the normal life of the city. In the last week of April, Kamal Junblat, head of the national movement declared to separate Kataib party and Arab world for its role in Ayn al-Rummana massacre and to withhold the support to any government in which Katiab was represented. As a result of this declaration Katiab members from the cabinet were resigned. After the resignation of Katiab members, their allies belonging to the different Christian political parties too resigned. The Prime Minister Rashid al-Sulh lost more than half of the Cabinet Members and severely criticized the Katiab party and charged the Katiab of exploiting sectarianism to

impose their will on the country and of using political and military provocations to create a series of crises in an attempt to expand the conflict.³⁵ Instead of Rashid Karami as next Prime Minister, Franjeh in a surprise move appointed a military cabinet on 23 May 1975 under a retired Muslim Commander of the Internal Security Forces Brigadier Nuri al-din al-Rifai with Iskander Ghanem himself the Army Commander as the Minister of Defence.³⁶ The formation of military cabinet received criticism from the Christians commenting that it was necessary to re-establish law and order.

The formation of military cabinet of fighting and clashes between the Kataib militiamen and their allies, on the one hand, and the National Movement and their allies on the other. This prompted Syria to mediate by sending its Foreign Minister Abd –al-Halim Khaddam and Vice Minister of Defence Naji Jamil. Their mediation was successful in convening Franjih to give up the military cabinet and accept Karami as Prime Minister, later on he refrained from cooperating with Karami and did little to help informing a strong government. Fighting continued uninterruptedly throughout June. It was only on 30 June that he was finally able to form a six man cabinet in which he himself was the Minister of Defence and Shamun leader of National Lebanese Party

(NLP) the close ally of the Kataib party held the important post of Minister of Interior.

SECOND PHASE OF CIVIL WAR:

After the formation of Karami government, Franjieh gave no cooperation to Karami. Unhappy and unsatisfied Franjieh with the way of the working of the government, retired shortly after the formation of the Karami cabinet to his summer home in Ihdin. Karami, however, refused to go to Ihdin for the formal cabinet meeting to be held under the President and he began to hold informal Ministerial meetings. The result was that the country came to have a dual administration one in Beirut and the other in Ihdin. It was creating a lot of confusion in controlling the internal security. Meanwhile in Ihdin, the President's son, Tony Franjieh took the charge and everything possible was going to be done to prevent Karami from getting away with his political victory.

On 24 August, 1975 clashes broke out between Shiites in the suburbs of Zahleh, backed by the Palestinian commandos and the Christians of the town. Soon the fighting spread to Tripoli where Sunni Muslim and Christians clashed. On 7 September, Christian gunmen abducted all passengers going by bus from Tripoli to Beirut and 12 Muslims were shot dead in cold blood.³⁷ With this news, ferocity broke

out between the Muslims of the city and the Maronites of Zghorta. Only after dismissal of General Ghanem and appointment of Brigadier Hanna Said in his place, a partial ceasefire was succeeded. While the fighting subsided in the North between Kataib militiamen and Muslim gunmen in which the predominantly Christian shopping district of Suq – al – Tawila was bombed and set on fire. Once again Syria mediated by forming a National Dialogue Committee (NDC), which had membership of twenty equally divided between the Christians and Muslim.³⁸

Third phase of the civil war

In NDC, Muslim side insisted on political reform plan but Christians representatives refused. Since much of the fighting was done by the Christian militiamen, this was obviously a tactics on the part of Christians for indefinite postponement of any discussion and heavy fighting broke out once again in Beirut and Tripoli. By this time the conflict between the Premier and the President came out into open. The President forced Premier to resign and the Muslims insists that no Sunni other than Karami would be allowed to assume the Premiership. To control the civil war Karami met with the President and outcome was the formation of the Higher Coordination Committee (HCC) on 3 November, 1975 with the representation of Muslims, Christians,

Palestinians and Security forces were represented.³⁹ But it had lesser impact on civil war. On 6 November a fighter carrying light and heavy weapons for the Maronite militia arrived at Jounieh. The Premier sent a Lebanese – Palestinian Force to make inspection but it was prevented by Kataib militiamen. Consequently, the Muslims also felt completely justified in proceeding with their own rearmament. But now a considerable emigration of Christians from Muslims areas and of Muslim from Christian areas. had already taken place, where the two communities still existed side by side feelings were uneasy. A new Christian strategy was formulated a plan to partition of Lebanon as a solution to the confrontation. The fighting still continued in Beirut. The Christian were not interested in a negotiated settlement of NDC and HCC. Meanwhile Franjeh's Zghorta Liberation Army recorded successes in its fight against the National Movement and Palestinians in Tripoli and surrounding areas with the coordination with Shamun and Gemayel. A worst incident took place, this was the discovery of the dead bodies of five members of the Kataib party near the Maronite village of al-Fanar. In reaction to this, all the roads in Christians dominated areas was blocked and in Beirut and around 100 Muslim were killed on the spot in the revenge of five Maronites. By the end of this year casualties on both sides had reportedly reached 6,650 killed and 1,400 wounded.⁴⁰

FORTH PHASE OF CIVIL WAR:

The Christian front refrained from attacking the Palestinian camps, which from the background trained and supplied with arms to the members of various organization of the National Movement. It was the main cause of the war. On 4 January 1976, a Maronite siege of the Palestinian refugee camps, of Tell al-Zatar and Jisr al-Basha, in Beirut marked the start of the fourth phase of the Civil War.⁴¹ Maronites stated it was a strategic necessity as it stood in between the Christian line of communication between last Beirut and Metn, but the PLO and Muslim forces denounced the siege as a deliberate act of unjustified provocation. Yassir Arafat announced not to tolerate and prepared to break it by force if necessary.

On 14 January, 1976 Kataib militiamen and their allies attacked and later occupied the Dubay Palestinian camp. Following the capitulation of the Dubay camp, the Christian militiamen began to prepare for a full-scale attack on the Muslim slums of al-Karantina, al Maslakh and at Maba. The Palestinian also launched an attack against Jiyya, al-Naima and Damur. In view of escalation of the conflict the Lebanese Army and Air Force were ordered to intervene by President Franjieh and Shamun by passing Premier Karami, who as Minister of

Defence was responsible for the armed forces. Premier Karami called upon the Maronites and the Palestinians to raise their sieges. On 18 January, 1976 the Maronite militias finally over ran at Karantina and al-Maslakh and on the same day Karami having failed to impose a ceasefire in time to save the tax slaves announced his resignation from the Premiership. On Palestinian request Syria supported the demonstration and he gradually began to turn in favour of the Muslims. Syria put firm pressure on the Lebanese leaders to reach a compromise. On 20 January, 1976 Syrian delegation composed of Foreign Minister Abdul Halim al-Khaddam, Chief Staff Hikmat Sihabi and Air Force Commander Naji Jamil arrived in Lebanon to help impose an effective ceasefire. With sound objection but later on the whole country fell under Palestinian military occupation and indirectly under Syrian control by forming a tripartite High Military Committee (HMC) to supervise and enforce a ceasefire, as a result of formation of HMC Karami took back his resignation on 24 January. On 14 February a declaration was made by Franjieh on 14 February in the form of Constitution Documents with certain changes in the political system. The National Assembly would be enlarged by including equal number of Muslim and Christian representatives from each religious group and sect according to size. The President would remain a Maronite and the Prime Minister was no longer

to be appointed by the President but would be elected by the National Legislature. The religious quota system for appointment in the government bureaucracy was to be retained. The Premier would be Sunni and the President of the Chamber of Deputies a Shiite. The PLA troops made responsible to enforce ceasefire and Syria would authority over how and where guerilla forces would be deployed.⁴²

Indirect Syrian Intervention

Syria's concern over the outbreak of civil strife in Lebanon in the spring of 1975 grew into an absorbing preoccupation as the strife graduated into the Civil War that would last for more than a decade. Meanwhile, Syria's stakes increased as it tried to shape the outcome of the war by exercising leverage over domestic Lebanese parties and the Palestinian Resistance.

The modalities used by Syria to influence events in Lebanon followed a clear escalatory pattern. Syria's intervention evolved as a process with definable thresholds, corresponding to three principal phases. In the initial, mediatory phase in December 1975, Syria relied primarily on non-coercive, diplomatic means. In the second phase in May 1976, coercive means were used only indirectly, when Palestinian forces

intervened in Lebanon on Syrian orders. Finally, direct intervention occurred in the third phase in October 1976.⁴³

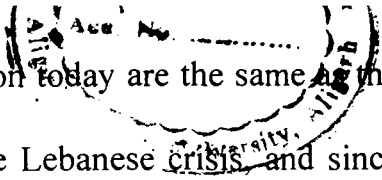
The dynamics of the Syrian escalation reveal that intervention in Lebanon was an incremental process, rather than a discrete act whose intent was clearly formulated from the start. One indication of tentativeness in Syrian probes is that whereas certain modalities of intervention, i.e., diplomatic or military, direct or indirect, predominated in each phase, none of the phases was exclusively characterized by a single modality. In fact, each stage harbored signals of escalatory intent towards its successor. Conversely, mediatory attempts were never abandoned even once direct military intervention was under way.

The decision-making process for Syria's intervention remains opaque to outside observers because of the secretiveness and censorship of the regime. There is evidence, as President Assad's Advisor of Foreign Affairs, Adib al-Dawood, declared, that "...As the crisis worsened and the possibility of war increased, the evaluation process was widened and was made more rigorous⁴⁴. However, while information on the size of the decisional unit and the identity of the participants in key Syrian decisions is revealing, the veneer of official

consensus is never punctured by Syrian spokesman. Wider consultations by President Hafez al-Assad may have been needed because the intervention was increasingly controversial within the elite and among the public at large, but allusions to such dissent are cryptic and rare. Therefore, in asking key questions about the Syrian intervention, it is best to counterpart official explanations with the actual record of Syrian behavior. President Assad asserted in an interview on 9 August 1978:

We entered Lebanon in response to requests and pleas for assistance, which came to us from hundreds of families, from thousands of Lebanese citizens, and from many different sides; and with the approval of the legitimate authorities in Lebanon⁴⁵.

Despite the consistent Syrian emphasis on Lebanese appeals, closer examination exhibits a complex and variable interplay between invitation and penetration. In the initial phase of war, mediatory missions were sent essentially on the Syrian initiative, although they were generally welcomed by parties to the Lebanese strife. In January 1976 a series of overt appeals were addressed to Syria both by the Lebanese President and by members of the anti-establishment coalition. By contrast, when Syria's massive military thrust into Lebanon occurred in June 1976, it was clearly a penetrational intervention.



The Syrian objectives in Lebanon today are the same as the Syrian objectives since the beginning of the Lebanese crisis, and since Syria sustained its initiatives and sacrifices to half the slaughter between our Lebanese brothers as the Information Minister, Ahmad Iskander Ahmad observed. The following were the objectives:

Preventing partition – the partition of Lebanon, whatever this may necessitate by way of effort and sacrifices. Establishing security and peace in Lebanon. Protection of the Palestinian Resistance; helping the Lebanese “brothers” to reconstruct and develop their country⁴⁶.

The above list of objectives reflect two dominant foci of Syrian involvement in the war. In the domestic Lebanese arena, Syria was committed to averting the negative outcome of partition and to realizing the positive goals of stability and national reconciliation. With respect to the Palestinian Resistance, Syria was eager to preserve its image of champion and defence.

The record shows two distinct strands in Syrian policy and raises questions about the degree of synchronization between the two. On the diplomatic level Syria tried to cultivate the image of an impartial arbiter throughout the Lebanese Civil War, pursuing contacts with pro- and anti-establishment Lebanese as well as the Palestinian Resistance.

Syrian diplomacy consistently supported perpetuation of the Lebanese political system, with only minor institutional reforms, and preservation of the Cairo Agreement.

On the military level, however, Syria engaged in an abrupt and dramatic shift of alignments in the midst of the war. Its abandonment of traditional Palestinian and Lebanese anti-establishment allies in favour of the pro-establishment forces was a tactical maneuver. Refusing to countenance the complete victory of either coalition in the Lebanese strife, Syria broke ranks with its long-standing allies when they refused to heed its counsel.

With respect to the Palestinian Resistance, a dichotomy emerged between those factions Syria could control and those which it could not. The forces of Saïqah and the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) forces based in Syria willingly carried out Syrian commands. On orders of President Assad, they first intervened in Lebanon to support the anti-establishment coalition, and subsequently fought against the same coalition, even combating PLA units based in Lebanon. By contrast, both the PLO factions loyal to Arafat and the rejectionist groups adhered to their alliance with the Lebanese insurgents against Syrian wishes. This

stand infuriated the Syrian elite, prompting its military assault on the Resistance in Lebanon.

In the domestic Lebanese context, Syria's efforts during the initial, mediatory phases were directed at reviving immobilized Lebanese political institutions. When this proved difficult, Syria made several attempts at institutional innovation, sponsoring interim political bodies to resolve the crisis and restore order. Clearly, the escalation of Syria's involvement was reactive to increase polarization in the target states. As more extreme positions prevailed within the contesting Lebanese coalitions, the possibility of political compromise became more elusive. Maronites within the pro-establishment group openly sponsored partition of Lebanon and creation of a Christian mini-state; while Kamal Junblat led the Lebanese National Movement in the call for revolutionary overthrow of the Lebanese system, rather than merely reform.

The most potent symbol and accelerator of Lebanese political polarization was the collapse of the Lebanese Army. From the earliest stage of the Civil War, these were signs of internal dissent in the Army, as well as challenges to its role by both individual militias and Palestinian guerrillas. Repeated disputes arose over the desirability of deploying the Army to check civil strife. The ultimate collapse of the

Army in March 1976 painfully demonstrated the inability of the Lebanese State to solve its own problems. This development opened the door to deeper Syrian involvement a deeper, indeed, than the Syrians themselves initially expected.

The complexity of tracing and analyzing the dynamics of the Syrian intervention stems from the various axes of ongoing conflict. Although different axes of conflict were often activated simultaneously, the salience of issues and actors varied during different phases of the war. A chronological approach seems most useful in analyzing the interplay between Syrian initiatives and developments in the target state. Each of the three major phases will be further divided into brief time frames, within which developments will be treated thematically issues and actors involved.

The first instance of the Lebanese Civil War was marked by the appearance of a typical corporation-government alliance. President Kamil Shamun, leader of the predominantly Maronite National Liberal Party also occupied the post of Chairman of the board of the Protein Company. This company in no time gained the fishing rights of the coastline along the predominantly Muslim city of Sidon. Poor Muslim

fishermen of Sidon were angered by the high technology fishing techniques of the company.

On 26 February 1975, the Lebanese Communist Party and other leftist parties organized demonstration in Sidon, agitating for the revocation of the Protein Company's license. After the Army was sent in to break up the demonstration, a general strike was called by left-wing groups in Sidon and, later, in Beirut and Tripoli. Meanwhile, port workers disrupted operations along the entire Lebanese coastline, and the wave of strikes threatened to spread. Troops were sent to break up barricades around Sidon, and heavy fighting continued for several days. On 2 March, demonstrators accepted a ceasefire on the condition that the Army withdraws from the city. The Lebanese Cabinet, meeting in emergency session, arrived at a compromised proposal whereby the Protein Company would only be permitted to operate eighteen miles offshore, so as not to interfere with the small fishing boats closer to the coast⁴⁷.

The "fisheries dispute" has been designed as the opening round of the Lebanese Civil War, marking "the point at which a significantly higher and sustained level of violence was manifested"⁴⁸. Most portentous or later developments as a controversy over the use of

the Army to control civil strife. Issues raised included the appropriate channels of authority for ordering Army action; the propriety of the Army's role; and challenges posed to the Army integrity by foreboding of internal dissent.

An intra-elite quarrel arose over authorization of the Army use in the 26 February demonstration in Sidon. This decision ignored the instructions of the Sunni Prime Minister, Rashid al-Sulh. Instead, the Maronite Army Commander, Gen. Iskandar Ghanim, assumed personal charge of the Army's conduct, maintaining contact with President Faranjiyih throughout the crisis. The Sunni establishment considered the use of the Army as an instrument of the Maronite Presidency and the lack of Deference to the Sunni Premiership an intolerable affront. Prime Minister Sulh was faulted for having disgraced the Sunni community by accepting a slight to his authority by the Army Commander. Sunni leaders demanded that he be replaced immediately by a more forceful leader.

On the substance of the Army's role, Sunni leaders complained that democratic liberties were violated when the Army fired on demonstrations in Sidon. Instead of firing on civilians, they argued, the Army should be defending Lebanon's border from Israeli raids. To

assure that in the future the Army would perform its appropriate functions, they demanded a reorganization of the Army command into a Military Command Council whose membership would be equally divided between Christians and Muslims, although the Commander-in-Chief would still be Maronite. The new council would then be answerable to the government as a whole rather than to the Maronite President.

The Lebanese National Movement (LNM) joined in criticizing the use of the Army in Sidon, and Kamal Junblat called for the immediate resignation of Chief-of-Staff, Ghanim. However, a lack of coordination between the LNM and the Sunni establishment was evident in Junblat's refusal to endorse their call for the Prime Minister's resignation. Instead, Junblat presumably because he did not wish to give his Sunni adversaries an easy political victory⁴⁹. In the absence of coordinated call for Prime Minister Sulh's resignation he was able to weather the storm, at least temporarily.

Meanwhile, members of the Christian establishment forcefully vindicated the Army's role in the Sidon incidents. Thousands of students joined demonstrations in support of the Army, held in predominantly Christian East Beirut. Responding to demonstrators' vilification of Muslim and leftist groups for demanding changes in the

Army command, the Maronite leaders of the Kata'ib and the National Liberal Parties rejected the Muslim proposal for a new Military Command Council⁵⁰.

Hoping to defuse tensions over the Army's role. President Faranjiyeh referred the issue of Army reform to a special committee for study. The government was particularly concerned by manifestations of tension within the Army in wake of the Sidon events. When Ma'ruf Sa'd, populist Sunni leader, died on 6 March of wounds inflicted during the Sidon demonstration, intense fighting occurred between Maronite and Muslim recruits in the Lebanese Army. These clashes were an early indication of the Army's potential for internal disintegration⁵¹.

Controversy over the Army's rule was further accentuated because of alleged participation by Palestinians in clashes with the Army. When troops sent to remove barricades on the road to Sidon on 28 February, 1975 armed civilians who opened fire on the troops included Palestinians from the nearby camp of Ayn al-Hulwa. Christian political spokesmen seized on this participation as evidence of Palestinian interference in internal Lebanese affairs. They cited a coordinated Palestinian and radical plot to undermine not only the Army but also the

Lebanese political system as a whole. PLO leaders, however, vigorously denied any connection between the Resistance and the Sidon events⁵².

Shortly after calm was restored, Syria proposed a joint military and political command with the PLO. This suggestion, in March 1975, was presented as a sign of support for the Palestinian movement, but might alternately be viewed as an attempt to increase Syrian influence over resistance decisions in view of recent tensions in Lebanon. Palestinian suspicions of Syrian intent surfaced when talks convened on 25 May about implementing the joining command came to naught. However, mere announcement of the proposal in March exacerbated Maronite apprehension about Syrian support for Palestinian participation in Lebanese affairs⁵³.

The debate over responsibility for the Ayn al-Rammana incident raised the broader issue of the Palestinians' status in Lebanon. In a meeting between President Faranjiyeh and Yasir Arafat on 14 May, the President complained that Resistance leaders had been specifically warned by the Lebanese Army to avoid driving vehicles through Ayn al-Rammana, so as not to offend the residents' sensitivities.⁵⁴ He complained of repeated "excesses" by Palestinian guerrillas attributing

the most flagrant offences to members of Rejectionist groups who refused to be bound by the Cairo Agreement⁵⁵.

In reply, Arafat emphasized that the Resistance was not “a political party in the Lebanese arena” and was determined to avoid interference in Lebanese internal affairs. He explained, however, that “we must be understood, for we are not an army in the disciplined sense, which can impose uniform behavior on all its elements”. He then promised to oblige all elements of the Resistance to adhere to the Cairo Agreement. Arafat had tried earlier to impose discipline, sending sorties of the PLO’s military police to refugee camps on 15 April to restrain the Rejectionists from provocative acts. After accepting the 16 April ceasefire, he dispatched members of the Palestinian Armed Struggle Command to assist the Lebanese Security Force in apprehending offenders⁵⁶.

Leaders of the Resistance believed that the Kata’ib precipitated the Ayn al-Rammana episode to provoke the guerrillas and challenge their status in Lebanon. In a meeting with the Arab Ambassadors to Lebanon on 14 April, Abu Iyad, second in command to Arafat in the PLO, asserted that the Resistance that exercised maximum self-restraint in recent year, despite the invective and vituperation of the

Kata'ib. Palestinians even pursued a political dialogue with Kataib leaders, who then reneged on a pledge to publicise a document which said that "Resistance is not the cause of Israeli avarice and aggression". The recent events, Abu Iyad declared, were intended to spark a clash between the guerrillas and the Lebanese authorities. He expressed the hope that the Kata'ib perpetrators would be punished and order restored but warned that if not, "we will not be responsible for the determination of the existing situation". Abu Iyad subsequently remarked that the Resistance had an interest in Lebanon's asserting its sovereign authority, because "with a strong state, one can reach an agreement"⁵⁷.

A weak Lebanese state meant, that both the Kata'ib and its opponents were interested in asserting themselves for or against the state. The Maronite extremists wanted to prove to their opponents that, it was they who held the key to order in Lebanon. In this area, the Maronites had support not only from their community but also from other Christian groups as well⁵⁸.

The main axis of conflict in subsequent weeks continued to be the Kata'ib-Palestinian rivalry. But the violence was spreading fast and afar. Soon even the National Liberal Militia by ex-President Kamil Shamun started helping the Kata'ib. Clashes in the vicinity of Beirut

involved al-Karantina and al-Moslakh, whose inhabitants were Sunni, Lebanese Shiites, Kurds, and Syrian workers. Lebanese leftist parties called particular attention to the harassment of Syrian workers. Baathists, Nasserites and Communists supported the Palestinians in clashes that spread from Beirut to Tripoli in the North and Sidon and Tyre in Southern Lebanon. Imam Musa al-Sadr, after meeting with Arafat and with the Sunni Mufti, Hasan Khalid, convened at the Shii High Council on 19 April. The Council meeting attended by seventy-seven influential Shias, declared its solidarity with the Resistance and called for fundamental political reform in Lebanon⁵⁹.

Militiamen associated with the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) also participated in clashes with the Kata'ib. The LNM's influence, however, was more decisive in the political than the military sphere. On 13 April, immediately after the Ayn al-Rammana incidents, a meeting of LNM leaders demanded the immediate dissolution of the Kata'ib Party and the exclusion of the two Kata'ib ministers serving on the Lebanese cabinet. After a more broadly based LNM conference on 26 April, Jumbalat declared that his front in Parliament would deny support to any government in which the Kata'ib Party participated⁶⁰.

Lebanon had not seen anything like the inter-group fights before. But political differences acquired intractable and brought drastic deterioration or inter-group ties. Never before had proscription been instituted, however, between two such broadly based groups⁶¹. Jumbalat sought to rally political support for his stand, meeting with Raymun Iddih, the only Maronite leader who had publicly criticized the Kata'ib for the Ayn al-Rammana events.

In addition Sunni leaders tried to discourage Junbalat from pursuing this political course, although they were reluctant to cross Junbalat by openly opposing proscription. President Faranjiyeh, in turn criticized Junbalat's stance and refused to accede to his demand for reprisals against the Kata'ib⁶².

Immediately after the military government was announced, a common front was established between the Lebanese National Movement and the Sunni establishment. Despite earlier disagreements between the two groups. Kamal Junbalat felt sufficiently provoked by the military government to contact Sa'ib Salam, his long-standing Sunni political rival. Cooperation with Salam was crucial because of the latter's partnership in the *tahaluf*, the tripartite alliance formed before the war between Salam, Rashid Kasami (a Sunni politician), and Raymun Iddih

(a Maronite politician). A joint statement was issued by the *tahaluf* and Junblat on 24 May, expressing their determination to undermine the military Cabinet. They may have feared that the Cabinet was a first step toward full military rule, or that it was intended to groom General Ghanim as a successor to President Faranjiyeh in 1976. The military Cabinet was endorsed only by Pierre Jumayyil of the Kata'ib and former President Kamil Sham'un, whose enthusiasm branded the Cabinet more starkly as an instrument of the Maronite Presidency.⁶³

Junbalat also made an overture toward the Palestinian Resistance by instructing the LNM to promote cooperation with the Resistance politically, popularly, and militarily. In one sense, the announcement of the military cabinet deflected attention from the Palestinian role in the war, by highlighting differences among domestic Lebanese contestants. Nevertheless, the Resistance felt particularly threatened by the military Cabinet, since General Ghanim had often used the Army to curb its operations in the past. Displaying an ambivalent posture, the Resistance declared its unwillingness to become involved in a domestic Lebanese matter, and asserted that it had no advance knowledge of the Cabinet's formation.

Arafat then alerted Syrian President Assad of the recent developments, asking his assistance in containing the situation. His overture was paralleled by Kamal Junbalat, who sent an envoy to Damascus for discussions with Syrian leaders⁶⁴.

The Resistance had previously approached Syria when Arafat visited Damascus several days after the Ayn al-Rammana incident, on 18 April⁶⁵. To what extent these overtures constituted an explicit request for Syrian involvement, and what type of involvement was desired, is unclear. Until the formation of the military Cabinet, Syria steered clear of public reactions to the Lebanese events, with the exception of press statements supporting the “rights of the Palestinian people”. A decision by Syrian leaders on more active involvement in mid-March reflected apprehension over the formation of the military cabinet⁶⁶.

Because of precedents of indirect Syrian intervention during clashes between Lebanese authorities and the Palestinian Resistance in 1969 and 1973, Syrian leaders may have felt pressured to intervene if the military Cabinet provoked similar clashes. Preferring to avoid this scenario, Syria decided to launch a diplomatic initiative instead.⁶⁷

Syrian involvement in the Lebanese crisis intensified in September 1975 when large scale outbreak of violence in Northern Lebanon and Beirut sparked an increase in the level of Syrian mediatory activities and the seriousness with which this role was pursued by Damascus. This is the moment when Syria launched its first significant and of course rather cautious interventionist role in the entire crisis. But nothing could set back the dynamics of conflict which had been triggered by a bickering political elite and a weakening Lebanese state. When the Lebanese Army was accused of intervening against members of a Muslim political organization in Tripoli killing twelve, full-scale fighting resumed.⁶⁸

Furthermore disputes arose over the possible use of the Army in Beirut when violence broke out there on 17 September, the Kata'ib initiated a full-scale attack on downtown Beirut. During escalating attacks in the capital and its environs, the Kata'ib were joined by other Maronite militias, including the National Liberals' militia, known as *al-Numas* (the Tigers), and an armed band called *Hurras al-Arz* (Guardians of the leaders). Christian spokesmen demanded Army intervention in Beirut but was met by Muslim opposition. The Palestinian Resistance too opposed Army intervention⁶⁹.

In the meanwhile PLO tried to help the security scenario in Tripoli and after attending a meeting sponsored by the LNM, Zuhays Muhsin, the head of the Palestinian Military Bureau decided to increase the number of Palestinian patrols deployed in Tripoli⁷⁰. But Muhsin's dual role as a Palestinian leader and a Syrian supporter raised difficulties before PLO's desire to maintain stability in Tripoli. Soon the situation became such that Palestinian Liberation Army elements and the Syrian-backed *Sa'igah* members started patrolling Tripoli. In the process Karami lost his credibility. The Palestinians withdrew after Assad's intervention. But the Syrian-backed *Sa'igah* remained.

There are many unanswered questions about this preliminary instance of Syrian indirect intervention. Officially, Palestinian transnational authorities were assigned responsibility for initiating intervention by Palestinian brigades and then for agreeing to the PLA withdrawal.

From late September 1975 until January 1976, Syrian diplomatic efforts were conducted quietly from the Syrian capital. Several important visits by Lebanese leaders to Damascus occurred, either at Syrian invitation or on their own initiative.

After an emergency meeting at the Presidential Palace in early October, Prime Minister Karami decided to visit Damascus, along with Yasir Arafat. Karami told President Assad and Foreign Minister, Khaddam that he was confronted with three options. One was to deploy the Army – an alternative which he ruled out, because of his desire not to inflame the fighting, and for the sake of the unity of the Army. Second, he could strive for national reconciliation, after stopping the fighting. Third, if reconciliation failed, he could offer his government's resignation.

The Syrian response revealed much about Syrian perceptions of the Lebanese crisis and the means deemed desirable for its resolution. While assigning first priority to achieving an end to the fighting, the Syrian leaders emphatically opposed deploying the Army, declaring that this would be counterproductive. Assad and Khaddam then registered their personal confidence in Karami.

This unusually frank articulation of Syria's closer identification with the Resistance than with the Lebanese left, and of its skepticism about the urgency of the left's full program of reforms, had significant implications for the future. Syria also indicated that its support for the Resistance was predicated on full implementation and

respect for the Cairo and Malkert Agreements, while calling on the Lebanese parties including the Kata'ib to recognize the "Palestinian, Arab and international legitimacy of the Palestine Liberation Organisation"⁷¹.

Immediately after the Damascus meeting to which he had been a party, Yasir Arafat directed the Resistance to assist in restoring stability in Beirut. He called on Palestinian Armed Struggle Command patrols in the West Beirut to apprehend armed men, dismantle barricades, and strengthen adherence to the latest ceasefire. He also ordered an end to arms demonstrations in Beirut and withdrawal of all armed elements, calling upon the LNM to adhere to the new measures as well⁷².

When these efforts failed to avert unprecedented violence in the capital late in October 1975, Yasir Arafat led a delegation of Palestinian guerrilla leaders to meet Prime Minister Karami on 29 October and offer assistance in restoring order. Similarly, Foreign Minister Khaddam called from Damascus to indicate Syria's willingness to advance any possible assistance. One result of these overtures was the formation, on 3 November, of a Higher Coordination Committee, whose function was investigate ceasefire violations and prevent such breaches from getting out of hand. The Committee included representatives of the

Army and the Internal Security Forces, as well as of Palestinian guerrilla groups⁷³.

A temporary lull in the violence following creation of still another institutional mechanism did not endure. In a bold stroke Syria invited Kata'ib chief Pierre al-Jumayyil to visit Damascus on 6 December. Whereas Arafat, Junbalat, and Musa Sadr, as leaders of partisan groups with which Syria traditionally identified, had visited Damascus repeatedly in previous months, the Syrian overture in singling out this extremist Maronite spokesman for high level consultations sparked widespread surprise and concern in Lebanon. President Assad opened the rather lengthy meeting with the Kata'ib chief by expressing distress over recent events in Lebanon. He pledged that Syria was willing to offer "every possible service", and would pursue its diplomatic efforts in Lebanon, "If the matter was necessary and if it was asked to do so". Assad emphasized Syria's desire to be considered "a friend of all Lebanese without exception". Elaborating the Syrian objectives, Foreign Minister Khaddam expressed frustration over the complexity of Lebanon's problems. He revealed that since the beginning of the Lebanese crisis, top Syrian officials had spent at least three hours a day following Lebanese developments. Khaddam explained that there were

really two crisis in Lebanon – a Lebanese-Lebanese crisis and a Lebanese-Palestinian crisis. As for Syria's involvement, Khaddam declared that Syria was not pursuing reactive strategies, but rather acting on the basis of its interests, and he advised Lebanon to do the same. One of the central causes of the crisis, he observed, was the weakness of the Lebanese state.

Lebanese leaders tried to convince Syria that bloodletting in Lebanon would have negative fallout on Damascus. Jumayyil tried to convey to the Syrians that Syrian support for these groups could be destabilizing and demanding to Syria's regional interests. Khaddam said, "bloodletting in Lebanon would bloody Syria as well"⁴.

On the day of the Jumayyil's visit to Damascus on 6 December, violent incidents sprang up all over the country. Four members of the Kata'ib Party were ambushed and murdered in Maronite-controlled territory by unidentified assailants. In retaliation, about two hundred Muslim civilians were massacred by Maronite militiamen on "Black Saturday" Over the next few weeks, the cycle of violence escalated. An alliance of Muslim and left-wing groups, reinforced by Palestinian militiamen, were led by Ibrahim Qulaylat in a Beirut attack against Christian positions. They dislodged Kata'ib forces from some of

the large Beirut hotels and made advances against downtown Beirut. Forces aligned with the LNM then overran a Christian village in the Bikaa Valley and the Kata'ib, in turn attacked several Muslim villages near Beirut⁷⁵.

Faranjiyeh hoped that by inviting Syria into Lebanon, he could persuade the latter "to redress the balance in favour of the Maronites". The beleaguered Lebanese President hoped that his move would keep the Lebanese National Movement and the Palestinians in line⁷⁶.

Nevertheless, a qualitative change in the nature and scope of the Syrian intervention did occur in January 1976. The degree to which Syrian escalation occurred in response to "invitations" by various Lebanese parties, rather than in promotion of Syrian designs, is a question that arose more sharply in the next phase.

As the polarization between the contending Lebanese coalitions increased, so did Syrian concern and involvement. In the early weeks of January, both "invitational" and "penetrational" dimensions characterized the Syrian role. President Faranjiyeh was reportedly in continuous contact with Syrian President Assad once he siege of the Palestinian refugee camps began on 4 January. The two

leaders agreed that Faranjiyeh would visit Damascus shortly to discuss and overall Lebanese settlement⁷⁷.

In the first official indication that Syria would intensify its involvement in Lebanon, Foreign Minister Khaddam asserted that this is a very sensitive situation in relation to Syria and in relation to the presence of the Palestinian Resistance there.

Moreover, Khaddam specified that he was referring not only to the areas of Lebanon detached from Syria in 1920, but to Mount Lebanon as well – “For Lebanon will either be unified or it will be restored to Syria”⁷⁸.

In actuality, Syria’s behavior in early January was limited to small-scale, indirect probes, similar to those of the previous July and September. In two instances, Syria militarily supported the Palestinian-LNM counteroffensive. Palestinian reinforcements from Syria joined in the siege of the Christian town of Zahleh in Bikaa Valley. Likewise Syrian -sponsored Sa’iqah guerrillas assisted Sunni forces in attacking Christian villages in the Northern Akkar region⁷⁹.

A more complex scenario emerged, however, when the LNM-Palestinian offensive against Damur ran into trouble. Having diverted forces to Beirut and other zones of combat, the Lebanese

National Movement was not equipped to pursue its siege of Damur against Maronite resistance. Palestinian forces of limited assistance, since most of them were still deployed in the South, close to the Israeli border. Kamal Junbalat became increasingly anxious, and in a meeting at the home of the Sunni Mufti, Hasan Khalid, at Avamun, he joined other LNM and traditional Muslim leaders in initiating an appeal for Syrian assistance⁸⁰.

Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad later cited the appeal of the Avamun summit as evidence that Syria's intervention in Lebanon was purely invitational. In an unusual and highly revealing speech delivered on 20 July 1976, President Assad explained the Syrian rationale in responding to the LNM's appeal. Assad relates that in mid-January, Lebanese Muslim and leftist leaders sent urgent "signal of distress" to Syria, due to the military collapse of LNM-Resistance forces. The members of the Avamun summit urged Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam to request President Assad to contact President Faranjiyeh and try to stop the fighting. Assad portrays himself as reluctant to comply with the request, not because of unwillingness to make the effort, but because he considered the demand unreasonable. He explained that the LNM and the Resistance had more weapons at their disposal than the

entire Lebanese Army, let alone the Kata'ib and National Liberals. He therefore told Khaddam "they must not hold out" and that he would not contact Faranjiyeh. However, Assad relented after Khaddam repeatedly called him to describe the desperation of the appeals who feared that after the fall of al-Karantina and al-Maslakh, the Kata'ib's next move would be to occupy West Beirut. Assad called Faranjiyeh on 18 January and arranged a cease-fire for that night, but the agreement didn't hold and fighting escalated instead. At this point Assad met with "some of our comrades in the leadership to determine what might be done to rescue the situation". Having already supplied arms and attempted mediation, The Syrian decided that "nothing remained but direct intervention"⁸¹.

At this point, Assad formed a special ad hoc cabinet to participate in all-important decisions involving Lebanon. The nine-member group, under Assad's chairmanship, included prominent representatives of the Army, Air Force, and Intelligence Service, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Leader of Sai'gah, and the two senior representatives of the Regional Command of the Baath Party. The representative of all key centers of power in the Syrian political system reflected the enhanced importance attached to development in Lebanon⁸².

The outcome of deliberations by the Syrian elite was a decision for a higher level of commitment in Lebanon. Assad explains the decision to intervene under the banner of the Palestinian Liberation Army, but later mentions that Syria moved in the PLA and other forces whose identity is not specified. He asserts that when the PLA began its entry into Lebanon, no one was aware that this was occurring. The autonomy of the Syrian decision is underscored by his remark that:

We did not consult with them [i.e. the Palestinian Resistance] and we did not consult with the nationalist parties, and naturally not one of them was prepared to discuss with us any measures [that they took]. The important thing is that they requested us to carry out what [i.e. whatever] would rescue them⁸³.

The approximately 3,500 men that entered Lebanon from Syria were primarily affiliated with the Yarmuk Brigade, one of the PLA units stationed in Syria. They were responding to a Syrian command to move forward, although officially all PLA units were subject to the direct command of Yasir Arafat. Whereas the issue of PLA loyalties would later arouse acrimonious Syrian-Palestinian dispute, in this instance the PLA intervention clearly furthered the goals of the PLO in Lebanon and of the Lebanese National Movement. Most of the PLA forces from Syria

were initially concentrated in the Bikaa Valley, but the presence of these reinforcements enabled Arafat to draw on his forces in Southern Lebanon for the siege against Damur.

The indirect Syrian intervention quickly shifted the Lebanese military balance to favour the anti-establishment coalition. By 20 January, Damur and the surrounding Maronite villages fell and were plundered, and Kamil Shamu'un's own home was devastated on 24 January. The LNM pursued its attacks on Zahleh in the Bikaa and on a Maronite town near Baalbek while Muslim and Palestinian forces from Tripoli assaulted neighboring Zgharta⁸⁴.

Deep pessimism arose in Maronite circles, for East Beirut and the Northern sector of Mount Lebanon were the only remaining areas squarely under their control. With these exceptions, it appeared that "the whole country fell now under Palestinian military occupation and, indirectly, under Syrian control⁸⁵.

The arrival of the Syrian delegation was also instrumental in alleviating the political impasse triggered by the resignation of Prime Minister Karami. In view of Karami's close contact with Syria, his resignation may have been an important factor prompting Syria's indirect intervention. Karami left himself room for political maneuver by not

submitting his resignation in writing to the President, as tradition would dictate. Faranjiyeh, in turn, chose to ignore and then to refuse the resignation. Once a ceasefire was worked out with Syrian assistance on 21 January and a Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian Higher Military Committee was appointed to supervise its implementation, Karami agreed to withdraw his resignation⁸⁶.

In his July 1976 speech, Assad hails the Constitutional Document as a major victory for all Lebanese. He takes pride in the fact that the document explicitly refers to Lebanon as an Arab State. However, he singles out two groups with vested interests in obstructing the reform plan. The first was the stratum of leaders and *Za'ims* who benefited from confessionals and feared a loss of privileges if the system were dismantled. Although they had paid lip service to the goal of abolishing confessionals in the past, they were "struck with shocks" when this became a viable possibility. Second, members of the numerous Lebanese militias earned their livelihood through the fighting, and feared that if security was restored after acceptance of the reform plan, they would be unemployed⁸⁷.

From the perspective of Lebanese, the view expressed by leading politicians displayed considerable variation. Moreover, the

positions of some individuals shifted over time. These fluctuations were associated with evolving perceptions of the domestic balance of power and of the reliability and usefulness of the Syrian connection.

The Palestinian leadership, while officially welcoming Syrian mediatory efforts from the outset, increasingly shared Junbalat's suspicion of Syrian intent. Mainstream PLO spokesmen were initially restrained in their criticism of Syria, leading to considerable inconsistency in public pronouncements by Palestinian leaders. On the one hand, Nayif Hawatmih, leader of the leftist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), endorsed Syria's mediatory role saying:

"Specific agreements have been reached which give practical implementation to the Cairo Agreement Syria exercises the role of guarantor of the proper execution of these agreements and of the same time guarantees (that)... the Lebanese state.... Should not violate if and should not encourage any aggression on the part of the Kata'ib and their associates against the Resistance"⁸⁸.

Despite evidence of growing antagonism to Syria within the Resistance, President Assad's account insists that Syria's mediation fully met Palestinian demands. He relates that as soon as a ceasefire agreement was achieved in January, he consulted the leaders of the Resistance to

find out what they wanted, before pursuing Syrian mediatory efforts. A PLO delegation to Damascus headed by Yasir Arafat listed demands including the freedom to exercise all rights under the Cairo Agreement in the right to guarantee the security of the refugee camps; responsibility of Palestinian affairs outside the camps; and confirmation of the principles of no interference with the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Assad comments that he would say that what was demanded was not necessary in its entirety or the sake of preserving the Resistance and allowing it to play its role against the likely enemy [i.e., Israel]. Nevertheless, President Faranjiyeh agreed to these demands without deleting a single letter from the written formulation of the Palestinian leaders. Subsequently, Palestinian objections are attributed by Assad to the fact that “the Resistance is now fighting for the goals of others”. Instead of keeping Palestinian priorities in mind, the Resistance allowed itself to become the tool of forces inside Lebanon and on the world scene that want to use the Resistance for their tactical or strategic objective.⁸⁹ Assad’s portrait reveals the backdrop to Syria’s disillusionment within its traditional Lebanese allies, as the LNM and Palestinian undermined Syrian mediation and prestige in Lebanon.

Direct Syrian Intervention during June - October 1976

Having failed to impose its will on the NM and a majority of the Palestinians with the help of the limited PLA and Sa'igah forces, Syria now decided to launch a full-scale offensive against its erstwhile allies in Lebanon.

The Syrian offensive began on 1976 when a Syrian armoured column consisting of 20,000 troops and sixty tanks entered Lebanon (see Map-4). The Following day 4,000 additional troops backed by two hundred tanks advanced in eastern Lebanon through the Bikaa Valley. Soon the strength of Syrian troops in Lebanon was doubled and total number of Syrian and pro Syrian Palestinian troops rose to 25,000.⁹⁰ The immediate precipitant for Syrian military intervention was an attack on two Maronite villages in northern Lebanon by maverick units of the Lebanese Army late in May 1976. Residents of the villages sent a telegram to President Assad, appealing for Syrian assistance. In a subsequent justification of Syria's response, Prime Minister Karami suggested that Syria's intervention was "motivated by nationalist and humanist sentiments, in response to the request of a group of citizens who were in a state of despair and fear, prompting them to appeal for assistance to sister Syria.

The entry of Syrian Army troops into Lebanon in the first week of June 1976 dramatically contrasted with the tentativeness of Syria's previous commitment in Lebanon. After the reassessment of early 1976, involving a shift in the direction of its alignments and an incremental rise in its commitment, the Syrian elite plunged decisively into direct military engagement.

Once President Assad and his advisers decided on this course, they did not await invitations by parties to the Lebanese strife. This phase of Syrian intervention and escalation was penetration in its designs and implementation. Nevertheless, miscalculations about the costs involved in achieving more ambitious objectives obliged the Syrian elite to make tactical re-adjustments. The large-scale Syrian military offensive suffered initial reversals, only to be subsequently revived at a still higher level and military commitment.

Once inside Lebanon, the troops followed three axes in their advance, leading toward Tripoli in the North, along the main Beirut-Damascus highway in the center, and toward Sidon in Southern Lebanon. However, Syrian forces were obliged to halt before reaching their destinations either in Sidon or in Beirut. After encountering stiff

resistance, the number of Syrian forces was doubled to 12,000 by 7 June⁹¹.

When Syrian armored columns initially advanced along the Beirut-Damascus highway, they expected their heavy equipment to intimidate Palestinian and LNM militiamen. Instead, the latter made effective use of anti-tank weapons provided by Syria earlier in the war. Syrian forces were temporarily halted at so far, in the central sector of the Beirut-Damascus highway, and only with the doubling of their number of 7 June were they able to proceed. The contingent leading toward Sidon reached the environs of the city later the same day but was unable to penetrate further after an ambush by Palestinian and Lebanese Arab Army troops incapacitated a Syrian armored reconnaissance squadrom.⁹²

For Syrian forces were unable to with stand the attacks, Assad declared that Syria consciously chose not to exercise its full range of military options. If Syria had so desired, it could easily have responded militarily with resolute and crushing measures. However, Syria was convinced that the problem in Lebanon was not primarily a military problem, and that the conspiracy is much greater than these little ones carry out these small treacherous actions. Believing that the

underlying issues could not be resolved by military means, Syria instructed every soldier to strike only self-defense and within the narrowest limits.

Moreover, Assad contends that the Syrian forces in Lebanon consisted of infantrymen lacking artillery, armour, or other means of support moreover, the Syrian Air Force has not fired a single shot or released a single bomb or a single missile in any place in Lebanon. Although strictly military logic would have dictated that Syria provide rapid support for its forces, political considerations dictated restraint. However, Assad insisted that “naturally, we are confident in the competence of our troops, and no one can surpass specified limits in harming them⁹³.

Syrian humiliation at being unable to overcome unexpectedly heavy resistance by Palestinian and LNM forces was deepened by defections from Syrian ranks. Most conspicuous were defections among PLA and Saiqa forces that had entered Lebanon earlier under Syrian auspices. This notably took place in Beirut, in reaction to a confrontation on 6 June between advancing Syrian forces and Palestinian-LNM militiamen in the Bikaa Valley. After the Syrians were erroneously reported to have used their Air force for attacks in the Bikaa

violent clashes erupted in Beirut between Palestinian-LNM militiamen and Sa'igah-PLO forces already stationed by the Syrians in the capital. As Palestinians fought Palestinians, many of those associated with Syria switched allegiance, contributing to the ease with which the Sa'igah-ALA forces in Beirut were disarmed. Even more threatening to the Syrian elite was dissent among regular Syrian forces. Individual pilots and unit commanders refused to participate in the Lebanese operation, and after entering Lebanon some officers defected to join Palestinian and LAA ranks. The offenders were quickly punished, however, and incidents of dissent remained limited⁹⁴.

The spectacle of Palestinians loyal to Yasir Arafat fighting Palestinians loyal to Hafiz al-Assad along side Syrian Army units prompted recriminations between Resistance leaders and Syria. Yasir Arafat flatly charged that Syria was attempting to liquidate the Palestinian Resistance⁹⁵.

President Assad, in his July 1976 speech, takes issue with the Palestinian right to pass judgments on Syrian conduct. He claims that the Palestinian leaders were the only ones who came forth and said that "Syria does not belong in Lebanon". If, by contrast, the President, Prime Minister, or President of the Chamber of Deputies of Lebanon asked

Syria to refrain from entering or to depart, Syria would acknowledge their right to do so and would consider complying. However, Lebanon is not Palestine, and the Palestinians therefore lacked any legal or moral premise for demanding Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon⁹⁶.

Moreover, Assad charges the Palestinian leadership with ingratitude, asserting that Syria entered Lebanon in the first place in order to rescue them. Now, PLO spokesmen were asking Syria to leave Lebanon, not for the sake of Palestine, but rather for the sake of others, for the sake of anything other than Palestine. Syria, however, as the “heart of Arabism”, would not be provoked into abandoning the sacred Palestinian cause, which is our cause and not the cause of individuals, particularly if these individuals act in a way which is harmful to this cause. Syria’s right to discern what would best promote the Palestinian cause was underscored by its numerous sacrifices on behalf of Palestine, unparalleled by any other Arab country⁹⁷.

Other Arab countries did, however, being to take an active interest in the fate of the Palestinians and in the overall Lebanese conflict after Syria’s massive intervention occurred.⁹⁸ An emergency meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers was convened on 6 June 1976 and on 9 June 1976 Arab League decided to establish a 2,500- man inter-Arab force.

The task of the force was to separate the Lebanese combatant, replace the Syrian forces, and implement a ceasefire accord.

On 11 July 1976 Yassir Arafat appealed to all Arab countries to engage in a mediatory effort, and Libyan mediation did result in a partial withdrawal of Syrian forces from Sidon the next day. Then, on 22 July, the PLO Executive Committee opened direct negotiation in Damascus, two days after a new Syrian offensive began against Palestinian National Movement positions in the Mountains east of Beirut⁹⁹.

On 6 August, Maronite militiamen gained control of the al-Nab and Shanty town, and on 12 August Tall al-Zatar finally succumbed after a fifty three days siege. In view of these occurrences, any prospects for implementing the Syrian-Palestinian agreement collapsed.¹⁰⁰

In unsuccessful efforts at Syrian-Palestinian negotiation in early September, 1976. Syria was represented by Air Force Commander, Naji Jamil and the PLO by Abu Iyad. Abu Iyad claimed that the PLO softened its stance during these negotiations, agreeing to unilateral withdrawal from the contested salient in return for binding assurances that Syria would not attack Palestinian and LNM forces in Lebanon.

Despite the omission of insistence on reciprocal Syrian withdrawal, Syria refused the offer¹⁰¹.

In the meantime, the Maronite militias with Syria backing initiated a second assault on the two main Palestinian camps, Tall al-Zatar and Jisr al-Basha. While Jisr al-Basha fell to its attackers towards the end of June the fighting over Tall al-Zatar continued for many more weeks. Syrian pressure against the NM-PRM forces in many parts of the country drained the latter's energies preventing them from mounting an effective defence of the camps. After a siege of fifty-two days, Maronite Militias finally overran this camp on 13 August amidst scenes of unprecedented savagery¹⁰².

The fall of Tall Al-Zater produced extreme concern in Riyadh¹⁰³. On 15 August Saudi Arabia along with Kuwait called for a summit meeting of the Arab League in mid-October to take stock of the deteriorating situation in Lebanon. To assure its preferred military and political outcome Syria realized that it would have to intensify its military operation against the NM-PRM before the Arab states constrained its action-Syria waited for Sarkis to assume the office of the President on 23 September 1976 and then launched a new military

offensive against the NM-PRM forces in order too dislodge there from most of their strongholds.¹⁰⁴

Israeli Response to Syrian Intervention in the Civil War

When the Syrian political initiative failed, Syria intervened militarily in June 1976 and its troops moved into Lebanon by that time. Then, Lebanon was a special danger spot, particularly vulnerable, because of its Civil War and Palestinian presence, to Israeli military and political penetration. The Lebanese Civil War was political manna to the Israelites¹⁰⁵. Syria's 1976 intervention in Lebanon was most immediately motivated by the grave security threat from the prospect that Civil War and partition would open the door to Israeli penetration, but the conflict also presented an opportunity for Damascus to insert itself as arbiter and draw Lebanon under its politics-military wing. In 1976 Syria intervened with greater force and against its former allies to prevent a Maronite defeat. Assad was well aware of efforts on the Maronite Right to draw Israel into the fighting on its behalf and feared the conflict would throw the Christians into the hands of Israel and balkanize Lebanon. A short while after the onset of the Civil War a special committee was created in Israel in order to deal with the situation in Lebanon. The participants in this committee included Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister,

Yigal Allon, Defence Minister, Shimon Peres, Minister without Portfolio, Yisrael Galili, Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur, head of the Mossad, head of the Military Intelligence Service (AMAN) and some senior officials from the Defence and Foreign Ministers.

During the first few months of the Civil War, with the Christian camp quite clearly on the offensive, Israel felt quite satisfied with the military developments in Lebanon. This satisfaction, however, soon gave way to alarm with emerging signs of growing Syrian involvement in the Lebanese conflict.

Israel has always viewed Syria as the most hostile and radical of all the confrontation states. Following the Syrian rejection of Sinai II, it was perceived as intent on forming an hostile alliance against Israel. Syrian activities in Lebanon, therefore aroused deep Israel suspicions. As the patron of Palestinian guerrilla organizations as well as the NM, Syria was seen by Israel as scheming to bring Lebanon under its hegemony. The first explicit warning that Israel would respond militarily in the event of large scale Syrian intervention in Lebanon was made by Premier Rabin on 31 October 1975¹⁰⁶. A Syrian military presence in Lebanon according to the Israeli Chief of Staff, Mordechai Gur, would constitute a clear geographical change in the situation and would oblige

Israel to respond. He added, “We must make sure that Lebanon does not become a confrontation country”¹⁰⁷.

The warning given by the Syrian Foreign Minister Kahddam in early January 1976 to the Lebanese Front that Syria would take over Lebanon if they persisted in their drive towards partition immediately heightened Israeli concern. The Israeli Defence Minister, Shimon Peres declared that “any Syrian Intervention in Lebanon can not leave Israel indifferent. Israel would have to consider taking setps”¹⁰⁸.

There were reports that Israeli troops backed by armour were massing along the border with massing along the border with Lebanon and the IDF on the Lebanese frontier was placed on full alert¹⁰⁹. As tension mounted the American government got in touch with both the countries in a bit to defuse the crisis. American reassurance to Israel that Syria would not intervene directly in the conflict was instrumental in restraining Israel¹¹⁰. Syria, on its part, not wishing to provoke Israel any further quickly moved to bring about a political resolution of the Lebanese conflict once the military situation on the ground had been reversed in favour of the NM-PRM forces.

In February and March, Syria intensified its efforts aimed at working out a political compromise however, failed due to the NM-PRM

opposition to the Syrian sponsored constitutional reform. As the NM demands were incompatible with the Syrian objective in Lebanon, a rift began to develop between Syria and her allies in Lebanon. A new alliance between the Maronites and Syria began to consolidate during this period. Assad began to contemplate direct intervention against his erstwhile allies in order to discipline them but he could not proceed without American assurances that Israel would be restrained from counter intervention. It had been maintained that, through, U.S. mediation, a tacit agreement was made between Israel and Syria, where in, Syria, in return for the deployment of its forces in Lebanon without Israeli interference, agreed not to interfere “in Israeli ground operations or air strikes against Palestinian guerilla positions, particularly those south of the Zahrani river”. Other conditions included no movement of Syrian troops south of the Zohrani; no deployment of Syrian missiles in Lebanon; no Syrian attempt to close the Christian port of Junieh; and no imbalance in the Syrian moves against the Christian and Palestinians”¹¹¹.

Syria began to seek American support thoughts contacts in Washington for the projected Syrian military intervention. The US was requested to restraint Israel from intervening once the Syrian army entered Lebanon. Syria repeatedly emphasized that it was being

requested by President Franjeh, the Shamunists and the Phalangists to intervene in the conflict.¹¹²

The US in particular felt that the emergence of a radical regime in Lebanon would adversely affect the American sponsored peace process now underway. Since Syria alone was capable of restoring order in Lebanon, the US agreed to the projected Syrian move in Lebanon.¹¹³ Later on, the US government got in touch with Israel in order to communicate the Syrian intentions and discuss the possibility of evolving a joint American Israeli strategy vis-à-vis Lebanon. After the mediation, Israel became increasingly prepared to accept a Syrian intervention provided it would be directed against the M-PRM forces in Lebanon. On 4 March, Israel communicated in the US its tolerance threshold on Syrian intervention. These were a set of conditions, known as 'red lines', laying down the geographical as well as functional limits beyond which Syrian activity in Lebanon would not be allowed to escalate.¹¹⁴

1. Syria was not to station SSAM missiles on Lebanese territories.
2. It was to respect the rights of the Lebanese front.
3. Israel was permitted to open skies above Lebanese territory;

4. Syrian units were to be deployed south of line stretching for Zahrani on the Mediterranean to Mashki in the Bikaa valley; and
5. Israel was to be given a 'free hand' south of this Zahrani-Mashki line.¹¹⁵

The acceptance of Syrian intervention in Lebanon had a number of advantages for Israel are as follow:

First, Israel was spared from undertaking a costly and a large scale military operation itself in order to save the Christians from defeat. Moreover, a large scale Israeli military action in Lebanon at the point of time would have, it all probability, jeopardized the interim settlement with Egypt and reoriented the latter towards a renewal of military activity.¹¹⁶

Second, Israel calculated that if a part of Syrian military resources were diverted to the Lebanese conflict, Syria's ability to confront Israel in a war would be reduced of the Syrian forces on the Golan would be weakened the Israelis were quick to perceive that it rather entailed a dispersion of Syrian military energies and logistical resources in a potential "Vietnamese" situation. Such a situation absolved the Israelis from the task of making a blatant moves that could create unwanted international repercussions.¹¹⁷

Third, Israel expected that a Syrian intervention in Lebanon would impose severe financial burdens on the country's already weak economy compelling the Assad regime to turn to the conservative Arab states in the Gulf for aid. This in turn would help reduce the Syrian militancy.

Fourth, Israel anticipated that a long drawn-out presence in Lebanon would weaken the morale of the Syrian army as well as foster in discipline and corruption within its ranks.¹¹⁸

Finally, the Syrian action was bound to lead to deep division within the Arab World. As one political commentator stated after the large-scale entry of Syrian army in Lebanon:

Peace and quit are now obtained on Israeli's frontier, the Arab world is fragmented.... And the dispute between Syrian and Egypt is a source of contentment for Israel, as is the dispute between Syria and the PO which affects policy in Damascus and bolsters relatively moderate views there.¹¹⁹

Thus on April 1976 as the first limited entry of Syrian troops took place, Israeli reaction was low-key with the Israeli concern being focused only on the South¹²⁰. During the summer of 1976 Syrian further reinforced its drive against the NM –PRM. Increased Syrian pressure

against the NM –PRM ultimately activated the other leading Arab States. This resulted in the Riyadh and Cairo conferences where a compromise was worked out in which Syria attained most of its objectives. During this period Israel could not but have watched with satisfaction Syria actively aiding the Moronites and vigorously suppressing the NM-PRM forces.¹²¹

Establishment of Arab Deterrent Force

Distressed by the pace of Syria's mountain offensive against the Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims. Saudi Arabia on 15 October issued a call for mini-summit at its capital, Riyadh, the following day. President Assad was persuaded to attend, and a special Saudi plane was sent to bring Yasir Arafat from Lebanon. Lebanese President Sarkis was also invited, as were representatives of Egypt and Kuwait. This forum then worked out a series of agreements to resolve the Lebanese crisis, which were ratified by the full plenary summit of the Arab League in Cairo on 25 and 2 October.¹²²

The result of the Riyadh Summit, endorsed by the Cairo Summit, affirmed the "collective Arab role" and presented a comprehensive plan (with decisions, mechanism, and schedule) to end

the war in Lebanon and return the country to normalcy. The decisions focused on the three major elements of the crisis:

1. Security – a ceasefire and definite halt to the fighting throughout all of Lebanon.
2. Sovereignty – the application of the Cairo Agreement, and
3. Internal accord and invitation to all Lebanese parties to enter into a political dialogues for achieving national reconciliation. The meeting established two mechanism to implemented these decision:
 - a. An Arab Deterrent Force (ADF), under the command of the President of Lebanon, to impose the ceasefire apply the Cairo Agreement, ensure collection of heavy arms, maintain internal security and assists the Lebanese authorities to reactivate public services and state institutions and
 - b. A committed comprising the representatives of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Kuwait to ensure, in coordination with the President of Lebanon, the application of the Cairo Agreement. The re-establishment of peace, including the withdrawal of

Palestinian armed forces from areas occupied since April 13, 1975, was scheduled to take place within a period of 45 days.

The ADF was formed predominantly from Syrian troops (80 percent, with symbolic contingents from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and South Yemen. The ADF was accepted by the Lebanese National Movement and Lukewarmly accepted by the Lebanese Front – but only after Jordanian mediation. The ADF was deployed throughout all of Lebanon except in the South, here it was deployed only to the Litani River, which approximated Israel's "red line". This deployment put an end to the fighting and led to the formation of a broad based a political government.¹²³

To enforce these security measures, the Arab League decided to transform the 2,500 men peacekeeping force created in June into a 30,000 men Arab Deterrent Force (ADF).¹²⁴ The ADF would officially be under the command of Lebanese President Sarkis, who would determined the size of Syria's contribution relative to other Arab States. In practice, the failure of the Arab League to designate the composition of the ADF at the outset assured continued Syrian predominance. The allocation of \$90 million by the Arab League for the

ADF in effect amounted to a subsidy for an enduring Syrian military presence in Lebanon.

The Arab League resolutions gave prominent attention to the future Palestinian role in Lebanon. The Palestinians were to adhere strictly to the terms of the 1969 Cairo Agreement, and to withdraw to the areas in Southern Lebanon assigned to them under that accord. The PLO renewed its commitment to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and to refrain from intervening in the country's internal affairs.

Responsibility for assuring Palestinian compliance with the Cairo Agreement was assigned to the ADF, and thus implicitly to Syria. In addition, a committee composed of Syrian, Saudi, Egyptian, and Kuwaiti representatives were designated to supervise implementation of the Cairo Agreement within forty-five days after the ADF's formation. Whereas conformity to the 1969 Agreement imposed curbs on Palestinian activity, the PLO did score an important gain at the Arab Summit. President Assad was persuaded to abandon his comparing to depose Yasir Arafat as the leaders of the organization, the two were formally reconciled at a meeting in Damascus on 20 October.¹²⁵

On the issue of domestic Lebanese reconciliation, however, the Arab Summit resolutions had very little to offer. The Arab League

called for convening a political dialogue as soon as possible but suggested no guidelines for discussion. In fact, none of the leaders of Lebanese political factions was invited to Riyadh or Cairo, and they viewed the summit resolutions as a Palestinian – Syrian, rather than into Lebanese accord. Initially, both pro and anti-establishment spokesmen opposed the accords and expressed unwillingness to cooperate with the ADF.

By 14 November, however, when Syrian troops painted their helmets green and moved into their new positions as an Arab Deterrent Force, no resistance was mounted. One explanatory factor is sheer exhaustion, after the loss of over 65,000 lives and the breakdown of fifty-five previous cease-fire agreements, the Lebanese were in no position to resume hostilities without outside assistance moreover, efforts had been made to achieve acquiescence of the major domestic parties.

The most strenuous opposition to the ADF, ironically, was voiced by Maronite leaders who objected to the presence of Syrian troops in Maronite territory. President Sarkis held intensive meeting with the leaders of the Lebanese Front – President, Faranjiyih Pierre al – Jumayyil of the Kata'ib Party, Kamil Shamun of the National Liberal Party, and Father Sharbil Karsis of the Maronite Monastic Orders, and gradually

persuaded them to agree to the new arrangement. Convincing the anti-establishment forces was largely the domain of faith, which exacted compliance from LNM and Palestinian Rejectionist groups. The latter at least derived consolation from the entry of “Arab” troops into Maronite territory. As for President Sarkis, he called on all Lebanese to greet the ADF “in love and brotherhood”.¹²⁶

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CHAPTER-3

CHAPTER-III

Syria's Policy Towards the Lebanese Conflict, 1977-1982

Two epochal events shaped Syria's policy toward Lebanon and the peace process. The first was the Golan Heights Disengagement Agreement that permanently pacified the Israeli-Syrian border, and the second was the decision by the Rabiat Arab summit to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. From that point on Asad began to pursue relentlessly the goal of dominating, through diplomacy and forces, Jordan, Lebanon, and the PLO, the three parties to the conflict with Israel. This chapter explores how Asad gradually dominated Lebanon and the PLO, and how he allied himself to Jordan. When Asad intervened militarily in Lebanon, he had to intervene on the side of the Lebanese state and the Christian Lebanese Front, to get the larger international approval probably also of Israel and the United States, and to project the image of a leader who wanted to curb the PLO and their Lebanese allies. Asad's assurances to the Christian Lebanese Leaders, that his military intervention was to make the PLO abide by the Cairo Agreement of 1969 and the Melkart Protocol of 1973, and that he would withdraw his troops after law and order were reestablished in

Lebanon, were worthless. In reality he intervened militarily to dominate Lebanon and to prevent it from making peace with Israel, and to use its territories confront Israel and foment conflict at will to undermine the peace process.

Asad never gave the impression that the door to a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was closed when he met President Carter in May 1977, or when he suggested unified Arab delegation to the Geneva Conference. Asad's proposal for a unified Arab delegation was construed as simply a means to increase the bargaining powers of the Arabs in the negotiations with Israel. From our analysis a different explanation emerges. A unified Arab delegation would enable Asad to have veto powers over any peace move, especially by the enthusiastic Sadat. In other words, Asad was not trying to augment his bargaining powers for negotiations, but he was trying to undermine, by every means at his disposal, the peace process.

It was Asad, with his endless delaying tactics, who made Sadat give up on the Geneva peace conference, and embark upon his historic visit to Jerusalem on November 19, 1977. Although Asad was publicly against Sadat's peace opportunity to rally all the other parties to the conflict against Sadat, and thus further delay the peace process. It was then that Asad invented the doctrine of strategic parity with Israel as the

sine quo non condition for peace negotiations with Israel. This meant the indefinite postponement of the peace process.

Israel's Litani Operation

The Litani Operation was the culmination of a process of local escalation in south Lebanon coupled with PLO's actions inside Israel. In retrospect, it appears that the Litani Operation was not a sign of a new strategy or a major departure from previous perceptions. Once Israel decided to back Sa'ad Haddad's militia and to protect the Christian villages, it became necessary for the Israeli Defense Force to increase its activity in the border area. As PLO strength in the south increased, the ability of the Christian militia to defend the Christian village diminished and direct Israeli activity became necessary. Israeli incursions into south Lebanon were therefore inevitable.

When the Likud Government came to power in May 1977, there was no significant change in the general Israeli strategy. Although the new Defence Minister, Ezer Weitzman, was less patient with Palestinian activity, he was nevertheless not keen on a real change in strategy. Nor did Menachem Begin direct any major change in policy and strategy in regard to Haddad's area, or to the general situation in south Lebanon.

During the summer of 1977, Syria was trying to control and limit the activities of the PLO in Lebanon in general and in the south in particular. Within the context of these activities the PLO was forced to sign the Shtura Agreement on 24 July 1977, which stipulated that Palestinian forces should withdraw from the area bordering Israel, elements of the Lebanese Army should be sent to the south and south Lebanon should be declared a demilitarized zone. The agreement did not come into force, however, the clashes between the PLO and the Christians in the south continued.

Israel became more concerned because of the clear increase in the size of PLO forces in the south. It also rejected the ideas of sending Lebanese Army units into the south (an idea back by the United States and Syria). This would have meant the closure of the 'Good Fence' and end of the close relations with Haddad's militia. The 'Good Fence' policy, initiated by former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for humanitarian relief after Israel was approached by South Lebanese Christians, was expanded as a result of 'Litani Operation' (see Map-5) to a regularized proxy relationship as Likud regarded the volatile political situation in Lebanon with suspicion. This suspicious was not only directed at the Palestinians but also at Syria which was threatening the independence of the Maronites in Beirut. In fact, only one option open: to

increase the military backing to the Christians, allowing them to conduct large-scale military operations. It should be noted that the Israeli reasoning was in a sense of logical continuation of the strategy devised and implemented by the Yitzhak Rabin's Government, which rejected the idea of a Syrian deployment in the south and encouraged the activity of Haddad. It is true that the Lebanese army was not the Syrian army. However, it was doubtful whether the Lebanese army would have been capable of imposing its will on the PLO. Furthermore, the Lebanese Army was seen at the time as being under Syrian control.

Israel was concerned not only with the pressure applied on the Christian villages in the south, but also with the possibility of renewed Palestinian actions against northern Israel. Aiding the Christian militia appeared to be the most effective means of limiting the activities of the PLO. Israeli armour took part in the operation and occupied positions in south Lebanon. In response, the Palestinians began rocket attacks on Israel.

While the fighting continued, Israel also sent deterrent signals to Syria. The United States was active in trying to calm the situation and to pre-empt further escalation. Under US pressure, the Israeli forces withdrew and a cease-fire was declared. This was not a formal cease-fire but a series of 'understandings' and tacit agreements

between Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinians, Syria and Haddad, all attained through the good offices of the United States.

Once Israeli involvement began and the United States tried to negotiate a cease-fire, Israel decided to try and use the situation for an overall settlement of the situation in south Lebanon.

The cease-fire collapsed because of the inherent tension between the Palestinians and the Christians in the south. The Palestinians increased their presence in the south and also moved in heavy weapons, to increase the pressure on the Christians. Israel extended artillery support to the Christians but avoided intervening with ground units. In November a process of direct escalation between Israel and the Palestinians developed. In retaliation for Palestinian rocket attacks on northern Israel and Israeli reaction launched a series of air strikes.

On 11 March 1978, a group of Palestinians landed on the Israeli coast. They hijacked a bus full of civilian passengers and drove to the suburbs of Tel-Aviv where they were stopped by Israeli security forces. In the ensuing battle thirty-five Israelis, most of them civilians were killed and seventy-one wounded.

This murderous operation sent a wave of outrage throughout Israel. The salience of revenge Israel is such that an operation is expected

to be almost automatic. Moreover, the Israeli retaliation is usually designed to cause more damage and pain to the Arab side than was caused to Israel.

The plan of operations was to attack south Lebanon, with the objective of causing as many casualties as possible to PLO units, destroying their infrastructure and establishing control over certain important dominating positions within a 10 km strip from the international border. However, the plan ultimately responded to the Israeli need to create some kind of security zone along the border within which the Haddad militia could extend its control and obviously with continued Israeli military help. Such a security zone would alleviate the threat to the Israeli settlements in the north and would also resolve the problem of the Christians.

The first stage of the operation code-named 'Even Hachochma' (the wisdom stone) was completed by 15 March, 1978. Opposition to the action was very limited; most of the Palestinian guerrillas withdrew in the face of the superior Israeli forces, and did not even participate in the fighting. According to various estimates there had been about 5,000 armed Palestinian guerrillas in south Lebanon, but their exact distribution was not known. Even if all of them were concentrated near the international border, they would not have been a match for the

Israeli forces. Apart from the ground thrust, Israeli air and naval units attacked many Palestinian bases throughout Lebanon.

Simultaneously with the launching of the operation, Israel notified the US about the operation, stressing that it was not planning to stay in Lebanon. In these communications, as well as in public statements, Israel declared that its objective was to reach a solution to the problem of south Lebanon. Once that was achieved, Israeli forces would withdraw.

The initial US reaction was perceived by Israeli decision makers as indicating that the US was ready to acquiesce in the operation. But, in fact, the US was increasingly concerned about Israeli plans for south Lebanon. With no prior political preparation or co-ordination between Israel and the US, Washington was not sure of Israel's real intentions there. Furthermore, it was not clear what kind of 'solution' to the situation Israel was interested in and by means of what procedures. The U.S. was also concerned about Israeli-Syrian relations. The set of understandings, both tacit and explicit, reached between Israel and Syrian, in which the US was partly related as a go-between, was liable to crumble under the pressure of the Israeli invasion. Moreover, the US was interested in expanding its influence in Syria, in order to bring it into the orbit of Israeli invasion seemed adversely to affect American prospects on these issues as well.

In its absence, the US did not co-ordinate its activities with moves by Israel, but sought to glean some advantage from a quick political move to obtain the withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon. When the Lebanese government began preparations to request a Security Council resolution demanding an immediate Israeli withdrawal, the United States took the initiative, and proposed a draft resolution which eventually became Security Council Resolution 425, (see Appendix-2), thus creating United Nation Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) (see Appendix-3).

The deployment of UNIFIL in south Lebanon created a new situation with both benefits and costs for Israel. On the positive side, the PLO military units were not allowed to be redeployed south of the Litani (except for the Tyre enclave). The infrastructure of the Palestinian organizations south of the Litani had been destroyed by Israel, and no opportunity was allowed for it to be repaired. Furthermore, UNIFIL had become an additional obstacle to the penetration of Palestinian units into Israel. There were numerous attempts by such units to cross the UNIFIL-held territory on their way to the international border, and on many occasions the UNIFIL units were able to stop these attempts.

At best, finally, the UNIFIL has been accepted as symbolic to help justify to the public the risks of withdrawing the Israel Defense

Force (IDF) after the Litani Operation. To Israeli strategic planners it was clear that a battalion commander of an international peacekeeping force would never expose his men to the risk of determined guerrilla attacks, the peacekeepers have neither the national interest nor the mandate to take necessary and effective counteraction.

The Litani Operation was conducted by Israeli Forces equipped with heavy armour and a lot of fire power. The Israeli High Command was anxious to keep down casualties as much as possible and therefore relied on applying intense fire power whenever there was any resistance. As a result considerable damage was caused to civilian property along the routes of the Israeli advance. In some places a mass civilian migration ensued. Those fleeing were primarily Shi'i civilians who, along with the Christians, had been the main victims of the war in the south. They had suffered enormously from the Palestinian organizations that had controlled the areas until the Litani Operations, and also from Israeli retaliatory actions.

In summary, the Israeli operation failed in its attempt to destroy the Palestinian organizations in the south since most of the Palestinian guerrillas fled northwards and built up an elaborate infrastructure north of the Litani. It also failed in its attempt to impose a new political order in the south.

Conflict Between Syria and the Lebanese Front

The Israeli “Litani Operation” changed the relationships between Syria and the various Lebanese organizations as well as with some of the leading Lebanese political figures. It also tied the PLO even more strongly to Syria. As a result of the Litani Operation, a dramatic change in alliance took place between Asad and the charismatic leader of the Shi’ite community, Imam Musa al-Sadr. In an open letter addressed to the Arabs about Southern Lebanon Published in *Al –Nabar al – Arabi wal-Duwali*, on March 25, 1978, Imam Musa al –Sadr accused the United States of “blessing” the Israeli military operation.¹ He also claimed that the United States had put “two conditions: not to target civilians... and not to clash with the Arab Deterrent Force [Syrian troops] even if it did clash with Lebanon, its independence, its sovereignty, its dignity and its unity”.² By pointing out to the fact that the Syrian troops of the ADF suffered no casualties and were not involved in the fighting, in contrast to the Lebanese population of *Jabal Amil*, in southern Lebanon, which was faced with death and destruction, Imam Musa al –Sadr took a clear stand in favor of ending the war in southern Lebanon. He wished to stop the PLO attacks against Israel, which had triggered the Israeli Litani Operation. This position was contrary to Asad’s strategy of keeping southern Lebanon an arena of a low –intensity conflict with Israel. By

opposing Asad, Musa al-Sadr signed his own death warrant.³ his staged disappearance in late August 1978 in Libya, was planned by Asad and executed by the Libyans in cooperation with Zuhair Muhsin, the head of the Syrian controlled al-Sa'iqa organization.⁴ The fact that Imam Musa al-Sadr was instrumental in issuing a fatwa declaring the Always of Syria part of the mainstream Ithna Ashariya. Shi'ite did not protect him from Asad'sire. Rather than being gunned down or blow up, as Kamal Junblat was in March 1977, or Bashir Gemayel in September 1982, or even Mufti Hasan Khalid in May 1989, al-Sadr just disappeared, a respectful Shi'ite exit from this world, reminiscent of the Ghayba.⁵

The genius of Imam Musa al –Sadr was that during the entire period from April 1975 until his disappearance in Libya in August 1978, he kept the Shi'ite community out of direct involvement in the violent conflict in Lebanon. He thus acted as he veritable shepherd and protector of his community. That is why the vice president of the supermen Islamic Shi'ite Council, Shaikh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al – din, could rightly claim, in April 1980, that the Shi'ite community did not fight in the war. [and that] violence is not the proper means for the realization of political reform.

As was pointed out earlier, Asad, in cooperation with al – Quahdhafi disposed of Imam Mussa al – Sadr, in late August 1978, to

clear the way for a more intensified struggle against Israel from Southern Lebanon, at the expense of the civilian population of Jabal 'Amil. The change occurred with the Amal movement, in April 1980, when Nabih Birri became its leader. The new leader was known for his unwavering support of the Syrian regime since December 1975. From then on, Amal under Nabih Birri became a major instrument in the hands of Asad in Lebanon. Asad's association with Amal, a Shi'ite's organization linked in some way to the Islamic Revolution of Iran, dispelled the allegations that the Asad regime was fighting Islamic organizations and was run by a heretic Muslim sect that is the Alawites. Perhaps Asad hoped that the Association also lent him some much needed legitimacy domestically and regionally.

The Israeli troops withdrew on June 12, 1978, from the region of southern Lebanon, which it had occupied since March 14, 1978. This not only led to deployment of the newly constituted UNIFIL but also to the handing over of part of the territory to Israel's Lebanese ally, Major Sa'd Haddad. This re-deployment coincided with the armed clashes that took place between the partisans of former President Franjiya and the militias of the Phalangist party, resulting in the killing of Franjiya's son, Tony and his wife and daughter, in Ihdin, on June 13, 1978.

Asad figured out that as Israel had already withdrawn its troops from Southern Lebanon, and the Egyptian –Israeli peace talks were underway, Israeli leaders would not be in a mood to engaged in a fight over Lebanon. So he launched an offensive against all those who were opposed to Asad's indefinite tutelage over Lebanon, that is, the Christian Lebanese Front and its major militia, the Lebaniese Forces led by Bashir Gemayel. Asad's guns began to intensely shell east Beirut and its hinterland, on July 1, 1978, and continued for six consecutive days. This led to the resignation of President Sarkis on July 6, 1978.

According to Pakradouni the American Ambassador parker pleaded with Sarkis to rescind his resignation.⁶ President Jimmy Carter called for an immediate cease – fire, and also attempted to make the UN Security Council take charge of the Lebanese problem. But the Lebanese government rejected the American plea because of Syrian pressure.

Syria and its various allies, including leftist parties and the PLO, encouraged Prime Minister al Huss, by virtue of his position, to block governmental decisions and obstruct President Sarkis's plans, he did the same with respect to President Carter's proposal. By depicting its adversaries as agents of Israel, Syria got the support of the Arab countries.

When President Sarkis withdrew his resignation he became the target of criticism by both the Christian Lebanese Front and Syria. When he depicted Syrian troops in his speech, which rescinded his resignation, as similar to “regular Lebanese forces.”⁷ The Lebanese Front accused him of Providing legitimacy to the Syrian troops, which had just bombarded East Beirut and its Christian hinterland. While Syrian had accused Sarkis of Supporting the Lebanese Front by demanding the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the Christian areas.

While Syria adamantly refused to allow the Lebanese army to replace Syrian troops in East Beirut, Asad wanted the Lebanese army to be sent to Southern Lebanon where Major Sa'd Haddad was in control. Ostensibly its mission, was to spread the power of the Lebanese state or al-Shariya to Southern Lebanon. Its real aim was, however, to pit the units of the Lebanese army against one another, and make it falter in its mission. Israel would then be blamed for this. Only one battalion of the Lebanese army managed to reach the village of Kawkaba, on July 31, 1978. But it came under shelling from Major Sa'd Haddad's troops and was virtually surrounded. It had to stop, and eventually withdrew. Thus the mission of the Lebanese army had failed and “was a serious embarrassment to the Lebanese government.”⁸

Syria was proposing to President Sarkis to send more troops to Southern Lebanon, and “to use force.”⁹ Former President Chamoun sent an open letter to President Asad, on September 22, 1978 urging him to withdraw the Syrian troops of the ADF from Lebanon. The exiled Christian leader Raymond Edde called from Paris, on September 26, 1978, requesting the replacement of the Syrian troops by European and Arab troops.¹⁰ The answer to these demands was an escalation of the conflict between the Syrian troops and the militias of the Lebanese Front, especially from September 23, 1978, to October 6, 1978. The irony of all this was that the renewal of the mandate of the ADF, by the helpless Lebanese government, on September 27, 1978, while the guns of the Syrian troops were blasting the civilian population in East Beirut and its hinterland, did take place.¹¹

President Carter proposed on September 28, 1978, an international conference for the solution of the Lebanese crisis, to include the United States, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and France. Syria immediately rejected the proposal and “intensified its military operation.”¹² In a message to the country, on October 2, 1978, President Sarkis called for a new plan for the redeployment of the Syrian troops of the ADF, and for a cabinet of national unity. Syria again rejected this proposal, and the fighting increased to an unprecedented level.¹³

President Sarkis decided to contact President Asad himself while the latter was on a visit to East Germany. Pakradouni relates what he describes as a surrealist telephone conversation between Sarkis and Asad on October 4, 1978. Sarkis told Asad: “No country in the world would tolerate what was happening now, I want a response to my plan of the re-deployment of the forces of the ADF, and prior to that I want an immediate cease – fire.” Asad answered as though nothing was troubling him and all the destruction that was wreaked on Lebanon by his army was perfectly normal: “We are studying the plan of re-deployment, and we want to know the views of the different parties towards the crisis in Lebanon.” Sarkis was furious and told Asad: “I am head of state, and the sole interlocutor to speak on behalf of Lebanon. I do not accept that you deal with anybody else.”¹⁴ Asad tried to calm down Sarkis by inviting him to Damascus “to discuss all aspects of the situation. The Asad –Sarkis talks were tense, and Sarkis did not mince his words. He complained that Syrian guns were shelling his presidential residence at B’abada. An irate Asad called into the meeting the chief of staff of the Syrian army, Hikmat al-Shihabi, who denied any knowledge that this shelling was going on or that his troops were responsible for it.

Despite the cease –fire declared by the UN Security Council on October 7, 1978, which was accepted by Syria, the latter rejected all

attempts to involve the UN, the United States, or France in the crisis in Lebanon. Even Sarkis's proposal for an Arab summit to discuss Lebanon was rejected by Syria. Instead, and for tactical purposes Asad accepted to convene a conference of the Arab countries represented in the ADF, but only at the foreign ministers level. The conference was held, in Bayt al-Din, in the Syrian controlled region of al-Shuf, during October 15-17, 1978, with the participation of Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Sudan.

At first, the representatives of the Arab countries tended to support the Syrian viewpoint, and the conference appeared to be reaching a dead end. Then Sarkis told the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Syria that if they did not budge then the conference should come to a close. The Saudis then convinced the Syrians to replace their troops in al-Ashrafiya (East Beirut) with Saudi and Sudanese troops from the ADF. As the Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam did not want to replace the Syrian troops by the Lebanese army, he agreed to this compromise.

The Bayt al – Din conferees created a follow-up committee composed of representatives from Saudi Arabia, Syrian, and Kuwait to supervise the implementation of the conference resolutions. The Bayt al-Din conference was a success for Syria as it reaffirmed its dominant role in the ADF and gave it Arab legitimacy for whatever it was worth.¹⁵

By late 1978, all the factions of the PLO were beholden to Syria. Asad had, by then, reneged on his promise to the Christian Lebanese Front and the Lebanese state to implement the Cairo Agreement and its Melkart Protocol, which had been the *raison d'être* of the ADF. As the PLO did not oppose the Syrian military presence in Lebanon, the Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam in turn, began to argue that the PLO had ceased to be an obstacle for the Lebanese state. "The real obstacle now are those who deal with the Israeli enemy in order to prolong the state of anxiety and instability in the country and create despair."¹⁶ Khaddam also dismissed the thesis that the Lebanese conflict and its continuation would constitute a threat to Syria's security. This demonstrates clearly the flaws in the assumption, held by many such as Patrick Seale, that Lebanon is Asad's quagmire.¹⁷ In the same interview Khaddam made a statement that betrayed Asad's attitude toward the return of the Golan Heights and the peace process. He brushed aside the occupation of the Golan Heights as constituting a problem, and referred to it simply as part of the overall problem, namely "the Arab – Israeli struggle."¹⁸ This meant that Asad was thriving on the Arab Israeli conflict and that the return of the occupied Golan Heights to Syrian was of no urgency whatsoever.

Asad and Arafat cemented their alliance by convening the PNC's fourteenth congress in Damascus during the period January 15-22, 1979. During that conference the Palestinian leaders saying the praises of Asad for his support of the PLO.¹⁹ Asad basked of the ostracism imposed on Egypt, and attempted to inherit Sadat's legacy of the October War of 1973. Asad claimed in his speech, in the opening session of the PNC congress delivered on January 15, 1979, that Sadat had fought that war with the limited objective, reviving the diplomatic efforts for the peaceful resolution of the Arab – Israeli conflict. Meanwhile Asad claimed that he had fought it as “a war of liberation.” Asad also maintained that the war in Lebanon was tantamount to “revenge” for the “October war of liberation” by the enemies of the Arabs.²⁰

This was another example of projection, on a somewhat undefined other, of the very actions that Asad and Arafat were responsible for.

On March 1, 1979, a new law regulating the Lebanese Army was passed unanimously by the Chamber of Deputies. The U.S. Ambassador, John Gunther Dean played an important role in convincing some of the reluctant politicians like former President Chamoun to endorse this new national defense law.²¹ Instead of taking over the various positions held by the PLO and Lebanese militias, the Lebanese

government decided to send units of the Lebanese Army to the security zone held by Major Sa'd Haddad. Consequently, on April 18, 1979 the commander of the Lebanese Army, General Victor al-Khuri, ordered a battalion, carefully composed to have a sectarian balance, to proceed to the villages of Ma'raka, al-Shihabiya, and Tabnin close to the security zone. However, the battalion was immediately faced with artillery fire from Major Sa'd Haddad's troops. This mission like the previous one in July 1979 failed miserably, because major Sa'd Haddad, who had hitherto declared his loyalty to the Lebanese Army decided to establish on the same day, April 18, 1979, an independent entity that he called the State of Free and Independent Lebanon.

President Sarkis issued a presidential decree, No. 1924, for the dismissal of Major Sa'd Haddad, on April 19, 1979, from the Lebanese Army. He was also court-martialled in absentia, because inter alia, he was working with Israel. Only former President Chamoun defended Sa'd Haddad as a patriot who was protecting the villages in the security zone from attacks by various Palestinian and Lebanese militias. Chamoun added that it was shameful that, on the one hand, Sa'd Haddad was regarded as a traitor, while, on the other hand, the Lebanese Army unit that moved to Southern Lebanon on April 18, 1979, had to pass

through Lebanese villages and towns which were occupied and lived under foreign [meaning Syrian and Palestinian] armed terror.

Thus by sending army units to Southern Lebanon, President Sarkis fell into Asad's trap. He naively accepted the latter's urging to send the Lebanese army units to the security zone.

Thus, instead of the Lebanese Army replacing the Syrian troops of the ADF, let alone those of the various Palestinian and Lebanese militias, Asad wanted it to go only to the security zone, so that it would fail again, and get discredited. By putting Sa'd Haddad on trial in a military court for dealing with Israel, this was a warning and set a precedent for all Lebanese politicians who dealt with Israel, that they also could face similar charges. During the Summit meeting between Asad and Sarkis, which took place on May 13-14, 1979, Sarkis insisted that Palestinians should withdraw their arm men from Southern Lebanon, and freeze their guerrilla operations. Asad told Sarkis that he would not ask Arafat to freeze his military operations but merely to reduce them.²²

The Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin called upon President Sarkis, on May 7, 1979, to negotiate an end to the conflict in Southern Lebanon with Israel, by coming to Jerusalem. Begin volunteered to go to Beirut, or even if that were preferable to meet in a

neutral place to sign a peace treaty with Lebanon in few days.²³ Begin pointed out that neither Israel nor Lebanon problems that Lebanon faced. He called upon the Syrian occupation army to leave at once, for it had ceased to have even to cover of being part of a joint Arab Defense Force [ADF] after Saudi Arabia withdrew its troops. The ADF is now a mere Syrian Force which destroys Lebanese villages and bombards innocent Christians and is the source of all problems in Lebanon.

The reaction of the Lebanese government was expressed on the same day by Prime Minister al-Huss who maintained that Begin's call for a peace treaty with Lebanon was puzzling in the wake of the ferocious aggressions on Lebanon which Israel had launched, and which led to the death of many civilians and caused tremendous destruction. Al – Huss failed to mention the cause of Israel's attacks in Southern Lebanon, namely the continued military operations against Israel by the PLO and its allies from their bases in Southern Lebanon.

Sarkis's response to Begin's call, on the other hand, merely reiterated that Lebanon had an armistice agreement since 1949 with Israel. He appeared to agree implicitly with Begin that there were no territorial disputes between the two countries by stating that the Lebanese – Israeli border was an internationally recognized border. Sarkis, unlikely al – Huss, clearly stated what had become of Southern Lebanon with the

armed presence of the PLO and its allies. He described the continued conflict as aberrant conditions... which were of a transient nature. Nevertheless, Sarkis was unwilling to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Begin, for three reasons. First, Sarkis did not want to follow in Sadat's footsteps for fear that Syria and the PLO would ostracize Lebanon from the Arab World as they had done with Egypt. Second he knew that Asad would have incited his proxies and allies, who were already publicly maligning, Sarkis for his close relationship with the Lebanese Front, to raise the ante to force him to resign. Third, Sarkis held the strange notion that Lebanon should be the last Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel. because of his fear that the last Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, because of his fear that the Christians of Lebanon would be perceived in the Arab world, as too enthusiastic about making peace with Israel.

On June 18, 1979, 1,200 Lebanese Army troops entered the Christian Southern suburbs of Beirut. It was the first time in four years that the Lebanese Army had been successfully deployed in these suburbs after local rival militias had rendered them insecure for their inhabitants. The popular enthusiasm with which the Lebanese Army was welcomed in Beirut worried Syria. It did not portend well for the Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon. Syria had always opposed the utilization of the

Lebanese Army to keep law and order, because its presence could render the Syrian Army's role in Lebanon superfluous. Consequently, two days after the Lebanese Army entered the Christian southern suburbs, clashes took place between the Syrian troops and the Lebanese Army in the region of Byblos and in the mountainous area of Aqura, which links Byblos to the Biqa valley. There is some evidence that the Syrian troops provoked these clashes, to put pressure on Sarkis (who was in the process of forming a new cabinet) and to discredit the Lebanese Army, which many Lebanese regarded as the last resort for ending conflict in Lebanon.

The Syrian newspaper Al-Ba'th described the deployment of the Lebanese Army in conflict – ridden sports as a positive and an exhilarating step, that could, however, produce serious negative consequences if not completed. The implicit criticism of the deployment of the Lebanese Army was unmistakable. On the Lebanese side, the military confrontation between Syrian troops and the Lebanese Army prompted former President Chamoun to send a petition to the UN Security Council, as well as to major powers to investigate the Syrian army's actions against the army of the "legitimate authorities."

Asad faced a growing domestic opposition from the militant groups of the Muslim Brothers since the mid 1970s. This opposition

reached a turning point on June 16, 1979, when it launched an attack on the Aleppo Artillery School, which killed an estimated eighty – three Alawi cadets and wounded fifty – four others. To divert the attention of the Syrian public from what sharpening inside Syria, Asad ordered Syrian fighter planes to intercept Israeli Planes (the first attempt since March 1974) that were bombing Palestinian guerrilla bases in Southern Lebanon, on June 27, 1979. The Syrian Airforce lost five MIG 21 planes while the Israeli Airforce incurred no losses. Asad wanted to rally support among the Syrian people by demonstrating that Syria was being threatened by Israel. Furthermore, confrontation over the skies of Lebanon was also to show the Arab countries that, after the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, Syria had become the only confrontation state against Israel, and therefore, deserved more political and financial support from them, especially from the oil producing Arab States of the Gulf.

Perhaps the most important conclusion, one can draw from this limited confrontation between Syria and Israel in Lebanon, was that Asad wanted to remain indefinitely in Lebanon to make sure that Syria could continue to have indirect, and occasionally direct confrontations with Israel. This was vital for the survival of the regime as the Syrian-

Israeli border had been sealed off since the signing of the Golan Heights Agreements on May 31, 1974.

Instead of a decrease in the PLO operations, as Asad had promised Sarkis, there was an increase in the violence in Southern Lebanon, followed by massive Israeli retaliatory attacks. The fighting between the PLO and its allies on the one hand, and the troops of Sa'd Haddad backed by Israeli artillery and Israeli Airforce on the other, continued almost unbarred from May 18 until August 26, 1979. Sa'd Haddad accused Syria of playing a direct role in the conflict by using the Palestinian Al-Sa'iqa organization as a channel for "infiltrating the South."²⁴

Consequently, there was not much hope that the Sarkis – Arafat meeting which was held on September 24, 1979, would succeed in reducing the violence. Arafat had already taken a stand with respect to Southern Lebanon. In an interview on July 22, 1979, Arafat adamantly refused to withdraw his forces from the region: "our withdrawal from the South means... I have capitulated to the plot of Camp David." Sarkis advised Arafat that armed struggle had exhausted its usefulness for the Palestinians, and that he should stop his guerilla operations from Lebanon.²⁵ Arafat showed a certain flexibility with respect to the deployment of the Lebanese Army in Southern Lebanon. He claimed that

he was not against such deployment, but that it was Lebanon's Arab Army, supported by Syria, which opposes such deployment.²⁶

At the Arab Summit, which was convened in Tunis during November 20-22, 1979, Sarkis did not mince his words. He maintained that while all the other Arab countries had closed their borders to the PLO, all of them are with the PLO as long it stays in Lebanon.²⁷ He accused the PLO of destabilizing and demanded complete withdrawal of the Palestinian Forces from Lebanon's borders with Israel.²⁸ This infuriated the PLO, and the Arab leaders ended up backing the PLO at the expense of Lebanon.²⁹

Syrian Redeployment in Lebanon

On February 4, 1980, Syria, in an unexpected move, decided to withdraw some of its troops from the coastal road between Beirut and Sidon, and from Beirut and its suburbs and redeploys them in Al-Biqa valley. This move coincided with clashes between Syrian security forces and members of the Muslim Brothers in Aleppo.³⁰

The Lebanese government was taken by surprise, and Prime Minister al-Huss hurried to Damascus to persuade Syria to postpone the implementation of this decision until the deployment of the Lebanese Army in place of the Deterrent Forces can be coordinated. Al-Huss was

received on the same day by Asad who agreed to postpone implementation of the decision for few days until Lebanon makes the necessary arrangements in this regard, affirming that the Syrian Forces will continue to abide by the tasks for which they entered Lebanon; namely, maintaining Lebanon's unity and safety and the security of its citizens.

The coverage of al –Huss's visit by the Syrian media was intended to demonstrate to the Syrian public that Asad's role in Lebanon had been so constructive that the Lebanese Prime Minister had begged Asad to keep his troops in Lebanon. However, evidence clearly indicated that the crisis of the withdrawal of Syrian troops from certain localities was contrived. Asad's proxies and allies flocked to Damascus. Former President Franjiya met Asad on February 5, the Druze leader, Walid Junblat and Amal leader, Hussein al – Hussain were received by Asad on February 6, and the PO leader, Arafat met Asad on February 7, 1980. One could not escape from the conclusion that Asad was trying to create a crisis in Lebanon to divert the Syrian public from the major internal strife in Syria.

As Arafat and the pro – PLO, Lebanese National Movement feared that the Syrian troops would be replaced by units from the Lebanese Army, a series of incidents took place against the barracks of

the Lebanese Army in West Beirut on February 13, 1980. Arafat maintained that the Syrian partial withdrawal would lead to the deployment of the PLO's forces to fill in the vacuum left by the ADF's withdrawal."³¹ In fact, Syria allowed the pro-Syrian units of the PLA to take over the positions that had been held by the Syrian troops on the coastal road between Beirut and Sidon, in an effort to rekindle the conflict between the Lebanese Army and the PLO.

A leading Lebanese journalist, Salim al -Lawzi, published in the widely read Arabic weekly al -Hawadith a series of articles on the internal political situation in Syria and its role in Lebanon. This incurred Asad's wrath. He was kid-napped in Lebanon on February 24, 1980, and his mutilated body was found in Beirut on March 4, 1980. It was a clear message from Asad to the Lebanese journalist, who had hitherto enjoyed the freedom of the press, that if they were critical of Syria they would suffer the same fate.

After the Arab Summit in Tunis failed to resolve the problem of Southern Lebanon, Sarkis tried to start a dialogue between Syria and the Christian Lebanese Front, and in particular with Bashir Gemayel. A date, February 23, 1980, was set for Bashir's envoy, Karim Pakradouni to meet with Khaddam. On the very same day, while Pakradouni was negotiating with Khaddam, an attempt to kill Bashir by

blowing up his car took place. It was unsuccessful because Bashir was not in it, but his eighteen month daughter and three body guards were killed. On March 12, 1980, former President Chamoun's car was targeted in a similar fashion, but that too was unsuccessful and he suffered only minor injuries. When asked whether an Arab country (i.e., Syria) was behind the attempt, Chamoun affirmed categorically that there was no doubt about it.

The dialogue between the Christian Lebanese Front and Syria, which Sarkis supported, continued despite the unsuccessful attempt at Bashir Gemayel's life. The latter welcomed the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the Eastern-Southern Christian suburbs of Beirut, which had taken place on March 7, 1980. Bashir told Pakradouni to intensify his contacts with Syria: We work for our interest. I am willing to go with Syria as far as it is deemed, necessary for our cause.

Bashir Gemayel gave the Syrians, after the withdrawal of March 7, 1980, the benefit of doubt. He hoped that the growing militant opposition against Asad in Syria would weaken his regime and force him to withdraw his troops from Lebanon. In reality Asad's apparent flexibility was tactical at best. His aim was not to achieve anything tangible but to gain time while his regime was threatened by domestic challenges. The only tangible results of the Syrian – Phalangist dialogue

was the exchange of Prisoners, fifty – five Syrian soldiers for sixteen Phalangist members, on April 12 and 17, 1980, respectively.

When the Syrian troops withdrew from the Christian Eastern –Southern suburbs, about one thousand two hundred troops from the Lebanese Army took over their positions. The commander of the Lebanese Army, Brigadier- General Victor al – Khuri visited Damascus on March 9, and again on May 24, 1980. During Khuri's second visit, the government – controlled Syrian Newspaper *tishrin* criticize the direct linking of the Lebanese Army Intelligence Bureau to the Commander of the Lebanese Army. *The Tishrin* editorial proposed the abolition of the Commando Force, which was created by the head of the Army Intelligence Bureau, Johnny Abduh, on the grounds that it was unnecessary under the current defense policies of the Lebanese government. This indicated that Syria was watching the growing role of the Lebanese Army with consternation. It was worried that the army would become strong enough to replace the Syrian troops in Lebanon. Syria's ally the PLA attacked the Lebanese Army's Muhammad Zughuib Barracks in Sidon on March 1, 1980. On June 3, 1980, a delegation of the newly reorganised Lebanese National Movement of Leftist Parties and organizations, which had become totally subservient to Syria, visited Damascus, and called for the rebuilding of the Lebanese Army on a

balanced basis. This phrase would become a refrain used by the pro-Syrian and pro-PLO detractors of the institution of the Lebanese Army.

When Christian Lebanese Forces were formed on August 30, 1976, they comprised essentially the militia of the Phalangist party Headed by Bashir Gemayel and the Numur militia of the National Liberals Party Headed by Dany Chamoun. Throughout 1979, clashes between the two militias became more frequent and resulted in over one hundred casualties from both sides. On July 7, 1980. Bashir Gemayel decided to end the fighting by mounting a coordinated attack on all the major branches and barracks of the Numur militia, thus decimating the power base of Dany Chamoun.

Although his favorite son of Dany was defeated, Camille Chamoun remained the President of the Lebanese Front. He neither demanded the punishment of those who were responsible for the military actions against his partisans, nor did he threaten to end his alliance with the Phalangists. In the word of Bashir Gemayel, Camillle Chamoun is really a great statesman who knows how to win and how to lose.

Bashir Gamayel's relentless efforts to unify the militias of the Lebanese Forces under his command was partly rooted in the fear that the security of the Christian East Beirut and its mountain hinterland

would be endangered, if the armed clashes between the Phalangist and the Numur militias continued. A more significant reason was Bashir's ambition to become the supreme leader, so all the Christian militias as a prelude to becoming President of Lebanon.

After the attack of July 7, 1980, Sarkis was in an unenviable position because, on the one hand, he felt strong sympathy for Dany Chamoun, but on the other, he did not want to jeopardize the recent rapport that he had established with Bashir Gemayel. Sarkis had to take some action after the attack. He accepted the resignation of Prime Minister al-Huss and tried to form a new cabinet to include those who wielded effective political power or in the Lebanese political parlance of the time al-Fdaliyat. On July 20, 1980 Sarkis asked Taqi-al-Din al-Sulh, a former Prime Minister, and a well-respected moderate politician to head the new Cabinet, however, al-Sulh was unable to form a new cabinet because of Asad's veto, which as always, was not expressed directly by Syrian officials but indirectly through their surrogates. What Munah al-Sulh, the envoy of Taqi al-Din al-Sulh, was told in Damascus was what the pro-Syrian Lebanese National Movement had publicly stated in a declaration, issued on July 25, 1980. Basically, Sarkis was accused of having accepted al-Huss's resignation to cover up for Bashir Gemayel's seventh of July operation. This the Syrians found unacceptable and

retaliated by preventing the formation of a new cabinet and launching a series of terrorist attacks. To silence the free press of Lebanon, the President of the Lebanese Press Syndicate, Riyah Taha, a prominent journalist, who hailed from the al-Hirmil region, was assassinated on July 23, 1980. Car bombs targeted Christian East Beirut and its hinterland, on July 30, August 7, August 24, September 27, and November 10, 1980, resulting in the death of ten people, and the wounding of over one hundred and fifty others.

The internal opposition to Asad in Syria mounted during 1980. On June 25, 1980, Asad himself became the target of assassination, but escaped with minor injuries. The next day he ordered the massacre of about eight hundred prisoners in the Palmyra prison. Salah al – Din al – Bitar, a leading intellectual and a former Syrian Prime Minister, who was the co –founder with Michel Aflaq of the Ba’th Party in 1947, was killed by Asad’s agents, in a car bomb in Paris on July 21, 1980. He had been organizing the Syrian opposition abroad, and in his last interview before his murder, al – Bitar called for an end to the dictatorship of the Asad’s regime, and the reestablishment of democratic rule and freedom in Syria.

Asad sided with Iran in the Iran – Iraq war, and antagonized King Husain of Jordan. He also accused the king of supporting and giving haven to Syrian Muslim Brothers who were behind the violent attacks

against the Asad regime in Syria. Under those circumstances it was not surprising that Asad decided to boycott the Arab Summit scheduled to be convened in Amman, during November 25-27, 1980. He also wanted Sarkis to follow suit. So he sent him the Chief-of-staff, Hikmatal – Shihabi, on November 24, 1980, to convince him not to attend the Arab Summit. Sarkis told al – Shihabi that he did not need convincing because he was on the side of Asad on this issue. Then he added “tell President Asad that it is a good time to end the cabinet crisis.” As a quid pro quo, for his boycott of the Arab Summit, Sarkis was asking Asad to remove obstacles to the formation of his cabinet. He was successful and the cabinet was formed on October 25, 1980, headed by Shafiq al – Wazzan.

Once Sarkis sided with Asad and declined to attend the Arab Summit, the tone of the parliamentary opposition led by Franjiya, Karami, and Junblat changed. Al – Wazzan’s cabinet managed to get a vote of confidence, with forty one votes in favor, six votes against, and one abstention of December 20, 1980, fifty three days after it was formed.

A conflict erupted, on December 21, 1980, between Bashir’s Lebanese Forces and the Syrian troops in the city of Zahle in the central Biqua’ region. It was rooted in Syria’s attempt to deploy its troops in Zahle. Bashir Gemayel’s reaction to the presence of the Syrian troops was to attack them and five Syrian soldiers were killed. Consequently, Syrian

troops surrounded the city and began to bombard it. The attack was to seek conflict with Bashir Gemayel's Christian Lebanese Forces and get some support from the Syrian Sunni Muslim public. Bashir, on the other hand took advantage of the siege of Zahle by Syrian troops and their shelling and killing of innocent civilians, to appeal to the UN and the Western power to put an end to the war waged by Asad on Zahle, and on Lebanon as a whole.

The attacks on Zahle during the Christmas season produced a strong humanitarian reaction in the capitals of the West. The strongest condemnation of the "barbaric shelling" of the innocent inhabitants of the city of Zahle came from French politicians. On December 24, 1980, the French Government protested the bombardment, by Syrian artillery, of "the Christian and Francophone city of Zahle." On December 26, 1980, two rockets were fired against the French Embassy in Beirut.

Objections were immediately raised against the French, by Syrian surrogates, for their interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon. Even Prime Minister, Shafiq al -Wazzan, in the wake of his first visit to Syria since he took office, was critical of the French role. Al -Wazzan praised the role of the Syrian troops in Lebanon while the civilian populations of Zahle was being subjected to a savage bombardment by these very troops. Bashir Gemayel took him to task by pointing to al -

Wazzan's silence about the "Syrian war of destruction against Zahle, and his lack of national sentiment in not expressing his solidarity with two hundred thousand of his fellow citizens [people of Zahle]." Lebanese – French relations were not tarnished by al – Wazzan's statements. As the French Ambassador to Lebanon, Louis Delamare, asserted the friendship between France and Lebanon is so old and dynamic that it will not be affected by a transient incident.

There were several reasons for Asad's escalation of the conflict in Lebanon. He hoped it would help him domestically to be fighting what the Syrian media depicted as "agents of the Zionist enemy", that is, Bashir Gemayel's Christian Lebanese Forces. Also, in a program entitled "The Lebanon We want to Build" issued on December 23, 1980, the Lebanese Front demanded the withdrawal of the Syrian troops. The request worried Asad who feared that the renewal of the mandate of the Syrian troops, which was due to January 1981, would become conditional rather than, as it had been hitherto, indefinite. Furthermore, the new Reagan Administration that was coming to power in early 1981, might regard the role of the Syrian troops in Lebanon as dispensable and pressure them to leave.

Finally, the most effective intervention in the Zahle conflict was neither the French nor the American, but the Israeli threats that Syria

received via France and the United States. They led to the lifting of the siege on Zahle a week later.

In a declaration issued on January 14, 1981, the Lebanese Front maintained that the Syrian Troops (ADF) had ceased to be a deterrent force but had turned into “a military occupation.” Therefore, the only option left for Lebanon was to request the deployment of UN forces all over the Lebanese territories and not to confine them to Southern Lebanon. To counter the Lebanese Front’s demand for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, former President Franjiya was promptly invited on January 14, 1981, to Damascus, to show that Syria had support among the Christians. Accompanied by a group of journalists, Franjiya provided Asad with the opportunity to emphasize the positive role Syria was playing in Lebanon. In Franjiya’s words that: Syria has no objective in its presence in Lebanon other than assisting the [Lebanese] state to spread its authority and preserve the unity of the Country. Franjiya reiterated a theme that would particularly appeal to Asad that: all Lebanese who reside in regions where the Syrian troops are operating enjoy a safe environment.

The leader of the Lebanese Front, Camille Chamoun, had no illusions that Muslim and Christian Politicians residing in the Syrian controlled regions were able to express their views freely. According to

him, no national reconciliation was possible unless Lebanon was liberated from all non-Lebanese troops, that is, both Syrian troops and the PLO. He claimed that not a single prominent Lebanese politician, living in areas controlled by the Syrian troops or the PLO, dared to engage in a dialogue with the Lebanese Front without fearing for his life and property.

President Sarkis visited Damascus during March 10-11, 1981. The Lebanese president pointed out that despite the presence of Syrian troops in West Beirut, an average of eight people a day were being killed and the shelling on central Beirut was continuing for the past six years. Sarkis told Asad: Palestinian actions in Southern Lebanon would ruin the country, that rightly or wrongly Syria appeared to be hindering an accord among the Lebanese, and that finally, there would be no solution without a Syrian – Phalangist reconciliation. In order to pacify Sarkis, Asad appeared to accept a dialogue with any Lebanese faction including the Phalangist party, and even expressed certain reservation about the Palestinian attitude toward Lebanon. Nevertheless, he was vague in his reply, and maintained only that to reach a solution was not an easy task as the conditions on the ground were complex. When Sarkis warned Asad that Syria's image would be tarnished and that the Syrian troops were increasingly being viewed as an army of occupation, Asad's response was "a smile with a lot of meaning." On the eve of Sarkis's visit

to Damascus, Bashir Gemayel, the Commander of the Lebanese Forces, had issued a statement maintaining that President Sarkis should insist on the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Syrian occupation army, which should be followed by the establishment of regular diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria.

Camille Chamoun was totally pessimistic about reaching an agreement with Asad. He believed that Sarkis should not have bothered to go to Damascus, because no accord in Lebanon would be possible through Syria mediation, as Asad was dead set against any such accord.

As the demand, by Christian Lebanese leaders, for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon became more frequent, Asad decided to confront those leaders by escalating the fighting. Asad's prediction, at the conclusion of the Asad – Sarkis meeting, that the security situation might remain the same or become worse was ominous. Camille Chamoun criticized this statement by Asad saying that: "the issue of Lebanon has become a past time from Syrian Officials, it has become a diversion... from problems faced by Saria domestically.

Although Sarkis had no illusions about improving the situation in Lebanon as result of his Damascus visit, he hoped that "a truce" would follow. But his hopes were dashed when the Syrian troops

suddenly bombarded East Beirut and Zahle simultaneously on April 2, 1981. This ushered in the second phase of the Zahle conflict, which began in December 1980.

The main thrust of Syria's onslaught was on Zahle, which it surrounded once again with Syrian Special Forces ready to enter the city. President Sarkis telephoned Asad and asked him to receive his envoy, Elias al -Harawi, who represented Zahle in the Chamber of Deputies, and was then Minister of Public Works. At the meeting, Asad harshly criticized the Christian Lebanese Front and the Christian Lebanese Forces. He was incensed by their frequent demands for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, and their portrayal of it as an army of occupation, on par with PLO forces. Asad told al-Harawi that he would never permit the Lebanese Army to be deployed anywhere in Lebanon, if the Lebanese Front did not reverse its stand on the presence of Syrian troops in that country. Asad added that although Syria had signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, it had kept a channel of communication with the U.S.A.

Asad also warned al - Harawi that the Lebanese Forces should not be fooled by the international diplomatic support they were getting, because by the time these diplomatic cables of protest and

condemnation were written, we will find sufficient time to bombard Zahle with one thousand shells.

When President Sarkis telephoned Asad for the second time in three days, on April 6, 1981, Asad stole his thunder by protesting that the Lebanese Army was shelling the Syrian Army. Sarkis was taken aback by Asad's allegation and cut short the conversation. He suggested instead that the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaddam be dispatched to Beirut to further discuss the conflict with him.

When Sarkis met Khaddam he put forward the demands of the Lebanese state, including an immediate end to the bombardment of the positions of the Lebanese Army by the ADF. He reminded Khaddam that the ADF was supposed to be under the command of the Lebanese President in accordance with resolutions of the Riyadh and Cairo Summits of October 1976. Sarkis also asked for the removal of the Syrian commanded PLA, which was deployed on the Green Line next to the Lebanese Army. Finally he requested that units of the Lebanese Army be sent to the besieged city of Zahle.

Khaddam retorted that the Biqa region and Zahle were part of the security zone that protected Damascus, and therefore, the presence of the Christian Lebanese Forces in Zahle was unacceptable to Syria.

Khaddam expounded on his theory that the conflict in Zahle was a plot hatched by Israel with the support of the U.S. and the complicity of Bashir Gemayel against Syria. Khaddam agreed to sending the Gendarmerie (the Internal Security Forces) to Zahle, but not the Lebanese Army until certain conditions were met. The foremost among these conditions was putting the Lebanese Army units under the command of the ADF, that is, under Syria's command. In five days of fighting against Syrian and PLA forces, during April 2-6, 1981, the Lebanese Army lost eight men and over a hundred were wounded.

Bashir Gemayel maintained that the targeting of the Lebanese Army was because it is composed of Christians and Muslims and that both are resisting [the Syrian occupation]. The Syrians are attacking the [Lebanese] Army for one reason only, and that is to undermine its unity. He added that when Taqi al -Din al-Sulh, the Prime Minister designate, managed to form a national unity cabinet in August 1980, Syria prevented that cabinet from seeing the light of day. We would like to address ourselves to Taqi al -Din al Sulh and implore him to reveal who put an end to that cabinet, and the reasons for the obstacles that were set up against the reconciliation efforts. We also address ourselves to the prominent personalities of West Beirut to ask who prevented them from getting in touch with the political leaders of east

Beirut to achieve a national reconciliation which could not be accomplished except by the Lebanese themselves.

The link between Secretary of State Haig's visit, which began on April 4, 1981, and included Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, and the Escalation of violence in Zahle was made in the Syrian press. Although Syria had started this phase of the Zahle crisis, it claimed there was an American-Israeli plan with multiple objectives that included the partition of Lebanon, the putting of pressure on Syria and exposing Syria's security to danger.

The Zahle conflict had another dimension. It was meant as a reminder to the new Reagan Administration that Syria could always create conflicts on the Lebanese arena. This was especially true when demands, such as those by Christian Lebanese politicians were made for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. The initiation of the conflict on the eve of Secretary of State Haig's first visit to the West Asia, was a clear message to that effect delivered to the Reagan Administration.

Syrian – Israeli Clashes and the Missile Crisis

Syria tightened its siege on Zahle (see Map-6), and continued its offensive by occupying strategic heights on the Mount

Senin connecting Zahle to Mount Lebanon. It used helicopter-borne commando troops. Asad's strategy was to push hard against the Lebanese Forces, so that Bashir Gemayel, who had spearheaded the demand for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, would talk to Syrian and in the process of negotiations withdraw his demand. Bashir Gemayel did not mind meeting Asad's special operations envoy Muhammad al-Khuri. Asad tactically decided to feign a conciliatory attitude toward Bashir Gemayel. The latter, however, had no illusions. In his third meeting with al-Khuri on May 5, 1981, Bashir outlined a plan that comprised the deployment of the Lebanese Army from Jizzin, in Southern Lebanon, to Zgharta in Northern Lebanon, and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. He also called for the establishment of a new political system which would not be based on bicephalism.

The day after the downing of the two Syrian helicopters, Asad reacted by deploying batteries of SAM-6 and SAM-2 surface to air missiles in the Biqa region. He, thus, added a new dimension to the Zahle crisis, namely a Syrian missiles crisis that pitted Syria against Israel to rally Arab support on his side. The United States responded swiftly to the new crisis . Presidential envoy Ambassador, Philip Habib was dispatched to Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. Habib told President Sarkis that his mission was to prevent a confrontation between Syria and Israel, because the

Reagan Administration believed that any Israeli-Syrian war could lead to a confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

President Sarkis realized that Habib's mission was limited in scope, and that the United States had no intention of addressing the Lebanese conflict in its entirety. The issue of the presence of the Syrian troops in Lebanon receded to the background as the resolution of both the Zahle crisis and the Syrian missiles crisis became the principal concerns of the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Israel continued to threaten to destroy the Syrian missiles in Lebanon, and had been on the verge of doing so, on two separate occasions on May 1 and 4, had it not been for Ambassador Habib who persuaded it not to act. For three weeks after that Syria showed some tactical flexibility, but then Asad realized that his brinkmanship of deploying the surface-to-air missiles had survived despite Israeli threats. On May 17, 1981, the Israeli government decided to seek diplomatic channels to resolve the Syrian missiles crisis. This emboldened Asad who subsequently resorted to violence to put pressure on both President Sarkis and Bashir Gemayel to withdraw their demand for a Syrian pullout. On the eve of and during Ambassador Philip Habib's second visit to Lebanon, Syrian guns shelled the presidential palace in Ba'abda on May 21, and again on May 23, 1981. On May 23, the residence of the

American Ambassador in Yerze, where Ambassador Habib was staying, also became the target of Syrian shelling.

Syria's weakening position in Lebanon enabled even President Sarkis to adopt an independent position. He demanded the problem of South Lebanon, including both the Palestinian presence and the Israeli retaliation, be discussed at the forthcoming tenth Arab Summit. His initiative displeased the Syrians, as it was a demonstration of independence and was close to the position of the Lebanese Front.

The summit again demonstrated the deep splits within the Arab world and its inability to devise plans for joint political effort on any issue, including Lebanon. The tenth Arab Summit created a follow – up committee to supervise the implementation of various undertakings in regard to South Lebanon.

The meeting of the follow – up committee was held on June 6, 1981, in Bayt al –Din, and was chaired by President Sarkis. Concomitantly, Syrian bombardment of Zahle resumed, and violence erupted in the city of Tripoli. In that meeting, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaddam stated that Bashir Gemayel, in his meeting with Muhammad al-Khuri, on May 5, 1981, had proposed a Christian entity that would take over part of Lebanon in agreement with Israel. To prove

his accusation, Khaddam produced an altered record of Bashir Gemayel's meeting with al-Khuri. Khaddam insisted that he would not meet Bashir Gemayel until he had severed his relations with Israel.

Khaddam's demand was partly rooted in the ideological stand of Asad's relentless struggle against Israel, and partly designed to appeal to Syrian and Arab public opinion in order to enhance Asad's image as the leading confrontation leader in the Arab world. More significantly, Syrian insistence on severing the relations between Bashir Gemayel and Israel was intended, in real politic terms, to undermine Bashir's alliance with Israel, which could have led eventually to the ouster of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

By transforming the Zahle conflict into a confrontation with Israel over the Syrian missile crisis, Asad made it impossible for any country at the Arab League meeting to propose a resolution mandating the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

The second meeting of the follow-up committee was held on June 23 and 24, 1981, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Khaddam, the Syrian Foreign Minister, insisted that the issue of Bashir Gemayel's relations with Israel was the key to the resolution of the Zahle conflict. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, separated the two issues, and called for an

immediate cease-fire. For Saudi Arabia, Zahle became the litmus test of its influence in Lebanon and the region as a whole, especially after many personalities including the Maronite Patriarch, Antoine Khuraysh, religious and civil leaders of Zahle appealed to the Saudi Arabian King to intercede with Syria and end the siege.

The show of force by Israel against Syria had weakened the latter, and consequently bolstered the moderate Arab States like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which played a crucial role in the follow-up committee. Saudi efforts also had the backing of the United States, attested by the presence of President Reagan's envoy Ambassador Habib in the region during June 9,-2, 1981.

On June 30, 1981, the Zahle conflict, which had lasted for six months, was finally resolved. Three hundred and fifty members of the Lebanese gendarmerie with eight armored cars and twenty other vehicles were deployed throughout the city, and ninety-five members of Bashir Gemayel's Lebanese Forces were evacuated, with their arms, from Zahle and back to the Christian hinterland. A celebration was held, on June 30, 1981, in East Beirut for those ninety-five members of the Lebanese Forces so were decorated for their valor in defending the city of Zahle. Bashir Gemayel in his address credited these fighters for making Zahle an

international city, in the course of which the Lebanese cause acquired an unprecedented international dimension.

Syria also declared victory, because the fighters of the Lebanese Forces were evacuated from the city of Zahle. However its claim that they surrendered their weapons to the ADF [Syrian troops] before they were transported from the city, was false. The Syrians, however, managed to veto the deployment of the Lebanese army in the city of Zahle.

Until mid-1981 Syria relied on the Lebanese Prime Minister to reject or undermine what the President of the Republic proposed. But by early July 1981, Prime Minister Shafiq al – Wazzan, fully endorsed the position of President Sarkis and accepted what was called Lebanon's "Working Document" (Warqat Amal), drafted by the Lebanese Foreign Minister Fu'ad Butros. That document included, inter alia, the phased withdrawal, by August 1, 1982, of Syrian troops from Lebanon. President Sarkis related to Pakradouni that he could not believe his eyes when Prime Minister al-Wazzan concurred with the "Working Document," which was tantamount to an official demand by Lebanon for the withdrawal of Syrian troops. Prime Minister al –Wazzan's stand was not based solely on his personal views. This was the position taken by the bulk of the Muslim establishment whether Sunni or Shi'ite. Thus, by July

1981, there was a Christian-Muslim consensus that the conflict should end, and that the Syrian troops should withdraw from Lebanon by August 1, 1982.

Syria's reaction to this accord among the Lebanese was completely negative, and it began a campaign to undermine this Lebanese Christian – Muslim consensus. The Syrian press attacked Bashir Gemayel even after he submitted his letter to President Sarkis on July 6, 1981 indicating that he had severed his relations with Israel. The Syrian Tishrin newspaper commented that the severance... is a necessary condition but not sufficient to start talks on a Lebanese accord. The Syrian Minister of Defense, Mustafa Tlas visited northern Lebanon on July 11, 1981, during which he criticized those who demanded the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Tlas claimed that both the Lebanese President and Prime Minister regarded the ADF [Syrian troops] as a legitimate army and as their official army. According to Syrian Defense Minister Tlas, the Arab follow-up committee was originally intended to assist the Lebanese President Sarkis to implement the resolutions of the 1976 Riyadh Summit. One of the resolutions was to put on trial those who deal with Israel. Today what is demanded from this committee is to assist to prosecute those who deal with [Israel]. But it came to Lebanon and gave those who deal with [Israel] an-exoneration. A perusal of the resolutions of the

Riyad Summit of 1976 clearly shown that there was not a single resolution about those who deal with Israel. Therefore what Tlas claimed was a figment of his imagination, aimed at putting further obstacles in the way of a Christian –Muslim consensus on the withdrawal of Syrian troops by August 1,1982.

The new French President, Francois Mitterand, elected in May 1981, showed serious interest in ending the conflict in Lebanon. In a letter sent to President Sarkis, on June 8, 1981, Mitterand advised “It is now become necessary to provide greater support for the independence, sovereignty and security of Lebanon.” His Foreign Minister, Claude Cheysson, made an official visit to Lebanon during August 29-30, 1981, in which he offered France's help to resolve the Lebanese crisis, whether in conjunction with the Arab follow-up committee or through the UN. The French foreign minister stated, in a press conference on August 30, 1981 of Lebanon as “occupied” by a foreign power, a clear allusion to Syria.³² Cheysson reaffirmed France's continued interest in training the officers of the Lebanese army and in supplying it with arms.³³

Although Cheysson visited Latakia in Syria where he met President Asad, on the heels of his visit to Lebanon, the Syrians were very much concerned about this increased interest France in Lebanese affairs. At the end of Cheysson's visit to Syria, Syrian Foreign Minister

Khaddam deceptively claimed that France and Syria were in complete agreement with respect to Lebanon. A few days later, on September 4, 1981, Syrian intelligence agents assassinated the French Ambassador to Lebanon, Louis Delamare, in West Beirut.³⁴ Typical of Syrian deception, the Syrian newspaper *Tishrin*, accused Israel of the assassination of the French Ambassador. It cited, inter alia, that Israel's motive "was revenge for the way he [Delamare] had depicted [the situation in Lebanon] and transmitted this depiction to his country. This in turn determined [France's] attitude towards the Lebanese crisis."³⁵ The reality was that this was precisely the reason why the Asad regime had ordered the assassination of the Ambassador in East Beirut on October 26. It then shifted the blame on Israel.

Syrian opposition to Arab follow-up committee

The assassination of French Ambassador Delamare coincided with the convening of the meeting of the Arab follow-up committee during September 3-4, 1981. Syrian foreign Minister Khaddam claimed that there was no problem between Syrian and Lebanon, and reiterated that the problems existed only among the Lebanese themselves. Syrian wanted to undermine the Christian – Muslim consensus that had emerged in the wake of the Lebanese working

Document, which had the support of both President Sarkis and Prime Minister al-Wazzan.

Syria and its allies openly attacked the unity between President Sarkis and Prime Minister al-Wazzan. For instance the leader of the Organisation for Communist Action (OCA), Muhsin Ibrahim, called for the resignation of Prime Minister al-Wazzan. Former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam who supported al-Wazzan answered, on September 22, 1981, that those who called for the resignation of Prime Minister al-Wazzan did not have any popular support because the Lebanese people would not accept to replace the legitimate authorities by people who were against legitimate authority and who were outlaws. Syria opposed the move. On October 27, 1981, the follow-up committee held a meeting at the ambassadorial level. A report of that meeting was presented by President Sarkis and Prime Minister al - Wazzan to the Lebanese cabinet the following day. Everything that the Lebanese Authority put forward was rejected in one way or another. The main objective of some was... to strip the legitimate authorities of every weapon they had, so as to be able to impose anything on them now or in the future.

The fifth meeting of the Arab follow - up committee was convened during November 7-8, 1981. Three of its resolutions dealt once again with nitty-gritty issues such as abiding by a complete cease fire, the

opening of the rest of the passages between East and West Beirut, the deployment of the Lebanese Gendarmerie on the East side of the Green Line in Beirut. The fourth resolution, however, was inspired by the Syrians. It called for the formation of a force to inspect the sea ports and the Lebanese coastline to prevent the supply of arms of the various militias. Its real objective was to prevent Bashir Gemayel's Lebanese Forces from getting arms from the Israelis. Former President Chamoun rejected this resolution in its entirety, and pointed out that the supply of arms to the Pro-Syrian militias did not come by sea but by land from Syria Territories and from the Syrian army's arsenal itself.

The inability of the Arab follow-up committee to resolve the crisis in Lebanon was primarily due to Syria, which was putting forward at every meeting of the follow-up committee impossible conditions. Syria tried to subvert the Christian-Muslim consensus. There were persistent Syrian efforts to put pressure on Prime Minister-al-Wazzan... to withdraw his signature from the Lebanese Working Document because it demanded a timetable for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon." In defiance of the Christian-Muslim consensus, which called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the Syrian President Asad, in an interview published on December 12, 1981, deceptively maintained, if they [the Lebanese] agree that the ADF [Syrian] troops

should leave, then we shall do so thankfully. But if they demand from us to stay in Lebanon we shall stay put... without concern for the difficulties [involved]. Former President Chamoun made a very perceptive comment on the Syrian President: Hafiz al-Asad is the most intelligent and capable of the Arab leaders. One can easily be enchanted if one is engaged with him in a conversation. But what ever effort you may exert to fathom... his plans you will not succeed, for generally the consequences of his actions are at loggerheads with his declared intentions.

Strengthening Ties between the Phalangists and Israel

On November 29, 1981, the Lebanese Phalangist Party celebrated its forty-fifth anniversary. Bashir Gemayel spoke openly about the need for a strong Lebanese president to end the conflict and unify the whole country. He argued that for free and honest presidential elections to take place it was imperative that Syrian troops withdraw from Lebanese territories by the summer of 1982. Bashir Gemayel proposed that the Arab follow – up committee be Transformed to an operational body in charge of supervising the withdrawal of the Syrian troops and the PLA (which was under Syrian control) from Beirut. It would also have to oversee their replacement with the Lebanese forces as well as with the official Lebanese army and Gendarmerie by January 15, 1982. He also proposed that the unruly PLO forces should be kept under control. Bashir

Gemayel presented a timetable for the rest of the country on the same lines as those applied to Beirut, with a deadline of May 15, 1982³⁶. He also proposed that the Lebanese Government negotiate with both Syrian and the PLO to set the basis for well defined and correct relations which would guarantee the complete retrieval of Lebanese sovereignty and authority. Bashir Gemayel believed that the Christian Muslim consensus was strong and that the Muslims of Lebanon wanted the legitimate Lebanese army to replace all then Lebanese forces that were occupying large areas of Lebanon. He hoped that the Arab follow-up committee would be instrumental in resolving the Lebanese crisis as the Lebanese themselves had already agreed to through the Lebanese working Document. Nevertheless Bashir could not pin all those on the Arab follow-up committee as the Arab counties had hitherto accomplished very little with respect to Lebanon.

A crucial landmark in Bashir's alliance with Israel was Ariel Sharon's first visit to East Beirut and its hinterland, in the second week of January 1982 and a month later, in February 1982, the Israeli chief of Staff Rafael Eitan visited Junya and was received with the Israeli flag fluttering alongside its Lebanese counterpart, [and] the band playing 'Hatikvah', the Israeli national anthem.³⁷ Bashir wanted the Israelis to clear Lebanon of both the PLO and Syria. He told Rafael Eitan that he

wanted the Israeli Defense Forces to reach up to the northern city of Tripoli. Bashir realized that getting rid of the PLO was going to solve only half the problem that Lebanon was facing. The other half was the presence of the Syrian troops in Lebanon. Asad had refused to withdraw from Lebanon by August 1, 1982, as stipulated by the Lebanese Working Document, which both President Sarkis and Prime Minister al-Wazzan had fully endorsed. Despite the fact that they represented the Legitimate authority and that their views represented the Christian –Muslim consensus, Syria did not give in as attested by the unsuccessful meetings of the Arab follow – up committee.

Bashir was therefore interested in an Israeli operation that would also push out the Syrian troops from Lebanon. When high ranking Israeli officer who was a member of a group of IDF officers visited Beirut, in April 1982, “to coordinate operational details” with the Lebanese Forces remarked that Israel had no interest in picking a fight with Syria, Bashir shot back, ‘If you don’t intend to take on the Syrians, don’t come.’³⁸

Even Ariel Sharon was not interested in a war with Syria. During the same month when he visited East Beirut and met the Christian Lebanese leaders, “Sharon and his aide [General Avraham Tamir met secretly in Geneva, in January 1982, with Syria’s Gen Rifa’at Assad, the

President's brother.³⁹ Sharon assured the Syrians that he was determined to destroy [the] Palestinian military infrastructure in Lebanon, without infringing [on] Syrian interests.⁴⁰ Sharon was under the illusion that by getting rid of the fighters of the PLO in Lebanon, while leaving the Syrian military presence intact, Israel would be safe from terrorist operations from Lebanese territories. Instead Israel was faced by the Hizbullah, which Syria substituted for the PLO.

The violent uprisings of the Muslim Brothers against the Asad regime reached an unprecedented level with the Hamah uprising, in February 1982. It was brutally put down by Syrian armed forces, which destroyed most of the old quarters of the city of Hamah. An estimated twenty thousand civilians were killed.⁴¹ Rifa' at Asad, Hafiz Asad's brother and henchman had threatened, earlier on July 1, 1980, that he was ready to kill one million Syrians if this was necessary to keep the Asad regime in power.⁴²

To distract attention from the massacres committed against his own people, Asad needed a conflict with Israel to divert hostility away from the Syrian 'Alawi regime. Asad knew, from his brother Rifa' at secret contacts with Ariel Sharon, that Israel was bent on a war against the PLO in Lebanon. Although Syria was not going to be the target of Israel's impending war, a limited participation of Syrian troops in

Lebanon against Israel was about to boost the Asad regime and silence his domestic opposition.

On June 3, 1982, Abu Nidal's operatives shot and gravely wounded the Israeli Ambassador to Britain, Shlomo Argov, just outside the Dorchester Hotel in London. The Gunman, Nawwaf Rusan, who shot Ambassador Argov had an Iraqi passport, and some analysts and journalists believed that Iraq was behind the attack.⁴³ Patrick Seale has, however, rightly pointed out that by June 1982, Abu Nidal was already on exceedingly bad terms with Saddam. The only plausible explanation was that Syria was behind it. The Abu Nidal gunman who shot ambassador Argov was in fact "a colonel in Syrian intelligence."⁴⁴

In response to the Abu Nidal's assassination attempt of Israeli Ambassador to Britain, Shlomo Argov, Israel retaliated against the PLO in Lebanon. This eventually escalated in to the long – planned Operation Peace for Galilee on June 6, 1982.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. Ibid, pp. 220 – 223. Foudd Ajami aptly started his seminar book on Arab politics with Salim Lawzi's murder. *The Arab predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 2-3.
3. Marius Deep, *The Lebanese Civil War*, (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1980), p. 64.
4. Gerard Michaud, "The Importance of Bodyguards," in *MERIP REPORTS*, No. 110, November – December 1982, p. 30.
5. "Salah ed – Din al – Bitar's Last Interview," in *MERIP REPORTS*, No. 110, November – December 1982, pp. 21-23
6. *Lubnan*, 1980, Vol. X, p. 436.

7. The text of this program is in *ibid.*, pp. 426-432.
8. *International herald Tribune* January 14, 1981, p.2.
9. Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 51.
10. Ariel Sharon with David Chanoff, *Warrior : An Autobiography*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 459.
11. Schiff and Ya'ari, *n. 9*, p. 159.
12. Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli – PLO War in Lebanon*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), pp. 97-99.
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International Commission to enquire into reported Violations of International Law by Israel during its Invasion of the Lebanon, Report of the International Commission, Sabra – Shatila massacre (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 176.

17. Waddah Shararah Dawlat, *Hizbullah Mujtam an Islamiyyan*, (Beirut: Dar al –Nahar, 1996), pp. 338 and 341-342.
18. Yossi Melman, “Israel’s back Road to Damascus, Jerusalem and Syria Have a Long History of Face –to-Face Contracts,” *The Washington Post*, August 4, 1991, p. C2.
19. For more detail see Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), pp. 76-105.
20. Girard Michaud, “The Importance of Bodyguards,” in *MERIP REPORTS*, No. 110, November – December 1982, p. 30.
21. Earlier in the spring of 1981 when Syria decided to invite Abu Nidal, General Muhamad Al –Khuli, the head of the Air Force Intelligence told an Abu Nidal delegation: “Our leadership [President Asad] has decided that Syria should be your country, so welcome to it!... Let us hope that the relationship between us will go from strength to strength.” Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A gun for Hire*, (New York: L. B. Taunis, 1992), p.122.

22. Schiff and Ya'ari. *n.9*, pp. 99-100.
23. Patrick Seale, Abu Nidal: *A gun for Hire* (New York: L.B. Tauris, 1992), *p. 225*.
24. Richard A. Gabriel, *n. 12*, *p. 63*.
25. Elie Salem, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, who accompanied Prime Minister al -Wazzan to Tunis to meet 'Arafat on February 1, 1983, makes no mention of any written assurance from Arafat. It was oral: "He [ʿArafat] insisted that his decision to withdraw all PLO fighters from Lebanon was final ... As the PLO fighters were not a disciplined army, he would have to come personally to the Bika' valley and Tripoli to persuade them and their families to leave." Elie Salem, *Violence and Diplomacy in Lebanon: the Troubled Years, 1982-1988*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995). *p. 62*.
26. *Monday Morning*, Vol. 12, No. 570 (June 13-19, 1983), *p. 58*.
27. Elie Salem, *n.25*, *p. 89*.
28. *Ibid*, *p. 114*.
29. The member of the Lebanese parliament were elected in the free and fair elections of 1972. In contrast Syria had no free elections

since the Ba'th Party took power through a military coup in March 1963.

30. *Monday Morning*, Vol. 17, No. 577, August 1-7, 1983, p. 6.
31. *The Washington Post*, August 30, 1983, p. A1.
32. Franklin P. Lamb, *Israel's War in Lebanon* (England: Russell Press, 1984), p. 5.
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34. Avner Yaniv and Lieber Robert, 'Personal Whim or Strategic Imperative? The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon, *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (Fall 1983), p. 112.
35. See Ha'aretz, 21 June and 28 July 1982
36. Shiffer, Shimon and Snow Ball, *Israel's Lebanon War* (Tell Aviv: Edamin, 1984), p. 25 see also Shiff, Ha'aretz, 7 June 1985.
37. Meir Merhav, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 August 1997
38. Meron Medzini, *Israel's Foreign Relations, Documents 1979 -1980* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1984) pp. 123 – 127.

39. Zeev Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p. 244
40. *Jerusalem Post*, 3 November 1993
41. Zeev Schiff, n. 39, p. 243.
42. Avraham Tamir, *A Soldier in Search of Peace* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 116
43. *Ha'aretz*, 28 June 1979.
44. Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), p. 363.

CHAPTER - 4

destroyed any Palestinian and Lebanese resistance there, simultaneously committing a series of violations against the civilian population,² Israeli troops proceeded to penetrate as far as Beirut. By 18 June 1982 they had surrounded the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) armed forces in the western part of the Lebanese capital.

According to Lebanese statistics, the Israeli offensive, particularly the intensive shelling of Beirut, caused 18000 deaths and 30000 injuries, mostly among civilians.

Despite the fact that the Syrians became involved in the fighting, the Israelis tried to avoid a military confrontation with Syria. The Israeli Prime Minister Begin sent a message, on June 8, 1982, through ambassador Philip Habib to Asad which included four points: “(a) We do not want war with your army. (b) Instruct your army not to fire on our soldiers. If our soldiers are not hit, they will not attack your army. (c) have your army withdraw from west to east and from south to north to the starting point where it was positioned On Saturday [June 5], before we commenced our campaign. The Israelis hoped that Asad would reach an arrangement with them on the aforementioned points. As Sharon put it in his memoirs: “An agreement by the Syrian at that point would have given us all the objectives we launched the Peace for Galilee Operation to achieve.”³

Asad 's response was to move, on the same day, six additional SAM-6 batteries into the Biqa' region of Lebanon,. The fact that these batteries were brought in from the Golan Heights rather than from other regions of Syria, was a clear message from Asad to Israel that he would like to keep the confrontation limited to Lebanese territories.⁴ Early in the morning on the next day, that is, on June 9, 1982, Prime Minister Begin relayed, through the American Ambassador Sam Lewis, a message to Asad demanding the removal of these new Sam – 6 batteries by 5 A.M.⁵ As Asad wanted a confrontation with Israel, he did not respond to the new demand of the Israelis, and refused to meet Ambassador Philip Habib who had arrived in Damascus on the same day, making him cool his heels for several hours. Israel had no choice but to destroy the Syrian missiles, a total of nineteen (seventeen SAM-2 and SAM-6, and two SAM-8) batteries. When the Syrian air force fighters rose to their defense, the ninety- six Israeli F-15 and F-16 jets shot down twenty – nine Syrian MIGs.⁶

When Ambassador Philip Habib at last was able to see President Asad in the late afternoon of June 9, the latter was defiant and refused to accept the Israeli demand for the removal of the PLO forces operating from the Syrian lines in the Biqa region. Asad agreed to a cease fire, but regarded the Israeli condition about the removal of the PLO

forces as both a big demand and an unreasonable one.⁷ Despite the battering of the Syrian forces. Asad told Philip Habib: We also have a condition for a cease fire, a full Israeli withdrawal.

Philip Habib naively believed Asad, who had thrived on the presence of the Israeli security zone in southern Lebanon since march 1978, and who had just provoked Israel to launch its operation peace in Galilee. Habib contacted President Reagan about Asad's demand. The reply he received from the Reagan administration that the United States "was prepared to guarantee an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon." But Asad insisted that the withdrawal "begin forthwith". Asad already knew that Israel's war objective was only to push back the PLO forces forty kilometers from the Israeli border. His demand for an immediate Israeli withdrawal, and his refusal to prevent the PLO forces from operating from Syrian lines, can therefore be construed as a clear indication that he wanted the war to continue. When Philip Habib relayed a new demand from Israel, that is, a "satisfactory security arrangements in the forty-kilometer zone." Asad argued "that is not within my power to decide. If I were the President of Lebanon, and it were up to me, I would refuse to recognize Israel's right to impose security arrangements on the soil of another country." This statement reveal Asad's agenda men and henceforth, namely, that the pacification of the Lebanese – Israeli border

would never be allowed. The policy was pursued by Asad from then until his death in June 2000, and continues under his son Bashshar, despite the internationally recognized full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon on May 24, 2000.

On June 10, 1982, an advancing Israeli mechanized brigade, heading north toward the village of Sultan Ya'qub in the eastern Biqa region, was ambushed by a Syrian mechanized brigade. It suffered heavy losses. Seven tanks were abandoned and another tank with its four crewmen was captured by the Syrians. An air battle, which took place on the same day, led to the loss of another twenty five Syrian MIGs and the loss of four helicopters. Just before a cease fire, agreed upon by both Israel and Syria, took effect at noon on June 11, 1982, another air battle resulted in the shooting down of eighteen Syrian MIGs.⁸ On the ground the Syrians were also battered before the cease fire deadline. As the Syrian Third Division moved southward and westward in the vicinity of Sultan Ya'qub village, the 82nd Armored Brigade of that Third Division was trapped by the Israelis and was virtually destroyed.⁹

Asad was able to achieve his objectives, namely to have a limited confrontation with Israel, and keep his forces solidly deployed in northern, central, and northeastern Lebanon because of two major reasons. First, because of the Israeli obsession with the PLO leaders and

their forces in West Beirut. Ariel Sharon had linked up the Israeli forces with the Christian Lebanese Forces in Ba'abdah and Beit Mery in Mount Lebanon, and had attacked and defeated the Syrian forces and their allied militias, from 'Alay to Sofar during 22-24, 1982.¹⁰ These battles cut off the Beirut Damascus highway, and trapped the PLO leaders and fighters, as well as the Syrian 85th Brigade in West Beirut. The other reason was that the U.S. administration misunderstood Asad's motivations and Played into his hands. A conversation between the American envoy Ambassador Philip Habib and Ariel Sharon at the house of the head of Lebanese military intelligence, Johnny Ahduh, on June 15, 1982, is very revealing. By mid – June Sharon was convinced that the withdrawal of an external forces from Lebanon was the *sine quo non* condition for pacifying permanently the Lebanese – Israeli border. Sharon relates that when he put forward his proposal, Ambassador Philip Habib said: The withdrawal of external forces cannot be symmetric. What do you mean it can't be symmetric? I asked. Well, he said, the Syrians have security interests in Lebanon. What security interests do they have in Lebanese? I said. Did Lebanon ever attack Syria? Did they ever threaten Syria? Has Syria suffered from any terrorist activities coming from Lebanon? The answer to such questions was obvious.¹¹

After two months of fighting, a cease-fire was negotiated through the mediation of United States Envoy Philip Habib. Under the terms of these negotiations, the PLO was to evacuate Beirut under the supervision of a multinational force deployed in the evacuated part of the town. The Habib Accords envisaged that West Beirut would subsequently be under the control of the Lebanese army, and the Palestinian leadership was given guarantees by the Americans regarding the security of civilians in the camps after their departure.

On August 23, 1982, Bashir Gemayel, who was very popular among Maronites was elected President of Lebanon by the National Assembly. Israel had relied on Gemayel and his forces as a counterbalance to the PLO, and ties between Israel and Maronite groups had grown stronger.¹²

Bashir Gemayel was elected President of Lebanon by a vote of 57 to 5 blank votes. Those who attended the parliamentary session were sixty – two deputies (forty three Christians as nineteen Muslims) out of the surviving ninety – two (fifty – one Christians and Forty – one Muslims) deputies.¹³ Bashir Gemayel's agenda was clear he wanted the Syrian army and the PLO forces out of Lebanon, and he also sought an agreement with Israel, perhaps, at first, sort of a peace treaty, to pacify permanently the Lebanese – Israeli border. These goals were at

loggerheads with Asad's strategy with respect to both the domination of Lebanon and the undermining of any peaceful resolution of the Arab – Israeli conflict. It was not surprising that the Syrian press depicted the elected President, Bashir Gemayel, as the “instrument to complete the occupation of Lebanon by Israel, and transform the country into a base for the Camp David alliance.”¹⁴

After the election of Bashir Gemayel, Asad threatened in a statement by a high – ranking Syrian military officer that if Bashir Gemayel were to sign a peace treaty with Israel, Syria would be in state of war with Lebanon. Asad further threatened that Syrian troops will not withdraw from Lebanon except when the last Israeli soldier leaves Lebanon. This sort of thinking appealed very much to the leaders of Arab states, who made their position clear in the resolutions concerning Lebanon issued at the Arab summit held in Fez, Morocco, on September 8, 1982. Although the final communiqué asserted that the task of the ADF (i.e., the Syrian army in Lebanon) had ended, it called for negotiations between the Lebanese government and the Syrian government to arrange for the withdrawal of Syrian troops in the Light of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Fu'ad Butros, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, expressed his dismay with the Arab summit because it implied that the Syrian troops would only withdraw after the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Consequently

President Asad began to talk about his willingness to withdraw his troops from Lebanon, knowing well enough that the Arab states would never put the Syrian troops on equal footing with the Israeli troops when the demand was voiced by Lebanon for a simultaneous withdrawal.

The evacuation of the PLO ended on 1 September 1982. After the expulsion of the PLO fighter from Beirut was completed, two days later, Israel deployed its armed forces around the refugee camps.

When the PLO was forced out of West Beirut and from the southern half of Lebanon by August 30, 1982, the major religious communities were relieved. The majority of the Christians who had been opposed to the military presence of the PLO, since the late 1960s, were delighted. The Shi'is of Jabal Amil in southern Lebanon were also relieved as they had suffered from Palestinian domination. They bore the brunt of the effect of the PO's quixotic attacks across the Lebanese – Israeli border, which resulted in the inevitable Israeli retaliation on the people of Jabal Amil themselves.¹⁵ The religious leader who would and perhaps even could have shielded his community from these catastrophes, the Charismatic Imam Musa al –Sadr, had been conveniently disposed off four year earlier. The Sunni community, which had hitherto been the staunch supporter of the PLO, had become disillusioned when the PLO – Israel conflict engulfed the Sunni urban strongholds of Sidon and West

Beirut. It was quite a dramatic change to witness the way PLO leader Arafat, whom the Sunni establishment of West Beirut had Sidon had supported through thick and thin, was quickly abandoned by them when the PLO – Israel war had reached their domain. The only people who regretted the departure of Arafat and his PLO from Beirut were the leaders of the defunct Lebanese National Movement, a motley of Pan – Arab, Pan – Syrian nationalists and communist parties and militias.¹⁶

There was a spirit of optimism in the air, if not euphoria, about an end to the conflict in Lebanon and the conflict across the Lebanese Israeli Border.

The Assassination of Bashir Gemayel

Bashir Gemayel was killed nine days before his term as President began. His hubris was his over self confidence that made him set an official schedule of meetings, without taking into account security concerns. From Asad's point of view it became vital to eliminate Bashir Gemayel from the political scene because he could free Lebanon from Syrian military and political domination. All evidence points to Asad and his Air Force Intelligence Chief Muhammad al-Khuri, having engineered the plot to kill Bashir Gemayel. On September 14, 1982, a bomb

exploded in the Phalangist Party office in East Beirut killing Bashir Gemayel and twenty – six others.¹⁷

The election of Bashir's brother Amin Gemayel as President of Lebanon on September 21, 1982 (by a vote of 77 to 3), did not constitute a threat to Asad for several reasons. First, Amin Gemayel had neither the Charisma nor the vision of his brother. Second, unlike Bashir, Amin Gemayel had no close ties with Israel. Third, the fact that Bashir was killed upon orders from Asad, was perceived as sufficient to deter Amin Gemayel from following in his brother's footsteps. Thus the demise of Bashir Gemayel was a great achievement from Asad's point of view. The Sabra – Shatila massacres that followed Bashir Gemayel's demise must have delighted Asad as they implicated the Christian Lebanese Forces headed by Elie Hubayqa and smeared the image of the Phalangist party and the Gemayels.¹⁸ In addition it embarrassed their Israeli ally who was in control of west Beirut then. It would also eventually lead to the resignation of Ariel Sharon, as the Minister of Defense, who was the main architect of the Israeli invasion of June 1982.

Asad's task thus became easier to achieve after the death of Bashir Gemayel. The Asad regime never publicly acknowledged its responsibility for the act. In explaining the reasons for the killing of Bashir Gemayel, the official Syrian media fed into the conspiratorial

mode of thinking that was and still is prevalent in the West Asia. Syrian officials blamed Israel for the death of Bashir Gemayel supposedly because he had asked of the withdrawal of Israeli troops and because he did not want to sign a peace treaty with Israel.¹⁹

Sabra and Shatila Massacre

On Wednesday 15 September, the day after the assassination of President elect Bashir Gemayel, the Israeli army occupied West Beirut, “encircling and sealing” the camps of Sabra and Shatila, which were inhabited by Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, the entirety of armed resisters (more than 14000 people) having evacuated Beirut and its suburbs²⁰ (see Map-8).

On 10 September 1982, the Multinational Forces left Beirut. The next day, Mr. Ariel Sharon announced that “2000 extremists” had remained inside the Palestinian refugee camps around Beirut.

According to statements made by Ariel Sharon on 22 September 1982 in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), the decision that the Phalangists should enter the refugee camps was made on Wednesday, 15 September 1982.²¹ Also according to general Sharon, the Israeli command had received the following instruction: the Tsahal (Israeli Defense Forces)²² forces are forbidden to enter the refugee camps. The

“mopping-up” of the camps will be carried out by the Phalangists or the Lebanese army.²³

On 15 September 1982, Israeli fighter-bombers were flying low over west Beirut and Israeli troops had secured their entry. General Sharon was present to personally direct the Israeli penetration, installing himself in the general army area at the Kuwait embassy junction situated at the edge of Shatila camp. From the roof of this six-storey building, it was possible to observe the town and the camps of Sabra and Shatila clearly.

By midday, the camps of Sabra and Shatila – in reality a single zone of refugee camps in the south of West Beirut – were surrounded by Israeli tanks and soldier, who had installed checkpoints all around the camps in order to monitor the entry or exit of any person. During the late afternoon and evening, the camps were shelled.

By Thursday 16 September 1982, the Israeli army controlled West Beirut. In a press release, the Israeli military spokesperson declared, “Tsahal controls all strategic points in Beirut. The refugee camps, inside which there is a concentration of extremists, are surrounded and sealed. On the morning of 16 September, the following order was issued by the

army high command: “The searching and mopping up of the camps will be done by the Phalangists/Lebanese Army.”²⁴

During the course of the morning, shells were being fired down at the camps from higher elevation and Israeli snipers were shooting at people in the streets. By approximately midday, the Israeli military command gave the phalangist militia the green light to enter the refugee camps. Shortly, in the evening, a unit of approximately 150 phalangists entered Shatila camp from the south and south-west.

The phalangist militia raped, killed, and injured a large number of unarmed civilians mostly children women and elderly people inside the “encircled and sealed” camps. These actions, accompanied for following by systematic roundups, backed or reinforced by the Israeli army, resulted in dozens of disappearances.

The Israeli army had full knowledge of what was going on in the camps right up until the morning of Saturday 18 September 1982, and its leaders were in continuous contact with the militia leaders who perpetrated the massacre. Yet they never intervened. Instead, they prevented civilians from escaping the camps and arranged for the camps to be illuminated throughout the night by flares launched into the sky from helicopter and mortars.

The count of victims varies between 700 and 3500. The exact figure can never be determined because, in addition to the approximately 1000 people who were buried in communal grave by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or in the cemeteries of Beirut by members of their families, a large number of corpses were buried beneath bulldozed buildings by the militia members themselves.²⁵ Also, particularly on 17 and 18 September, hundreds of people were carried away alive in trucks towards unknown destinations, never to return.

The United Nations Security Council condemned the massacre with Resolution 521 (see Appendix-4) (19 September 1982). This condemnation was followed by a 16 December 1982 General Assembly resolution qualifying the massacre as an “act of genocide”. This Israeli action breached its agreement with the United States not to occupy West Beirut,²⁶ the US had also given written guarantees that it would ensure the protection of the Muslim of West Beirut. Israel’s occupation also violated its peace agreements with Muslim forces in Beirut and with Syria.

Israel – Lebanon Peace Treaty and the Syrian Response

On December 9, 1982, fighting erupted suddenly in Tripoli between the Alawi militia of the so – called Arab Democratic party and the Sunni militias of Bab al – Tabbanah. This prompted Rashid Karami, Tripoli's most preeminent political leader, to appeal to Asad to end the conflict. Karami implied that Asad was calling the shots: a gesture from him [Asad] would put an end to everyone who has not been convinced yet that such actions constitute a source of danger. From then on fighting engulfed the city of Tripoli involving Syrian troops of the ADF. Two Syrian delegations visited Tripoli on December 15 and 30, 1982, ostensibly to resolve the conflict. The first delegations headed by the Foreign Minister Khaddam and the Defense Minister Tlas, and the second headed by Syrian Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Addi who gave a sum equivalent to \$3 million for victims of the fighting. Karami, whether he believed what he said or not, declared on December 30, 1982, that the fact that the two Syrian delegations had visited Tripoli within ten days, and that the Syrian President himself was involved in the payment of compensation for those suffered from the damages inflicted upon them by the fighting, was "irrefutable evidence that they [Syrians] were against what was taking place in Tripoli. This statement by Karami must have pleased Asad because it covered up his deceptive actions. The situation

was reminiscent of previous occasions when Asad fomented a conflict, and called for numerous cease – fires that would not hold, so that eventually the local political leaders as well as the Lebanese government sought Asad’s mediation to stop the conflict, which he had wittingly incited.

As the American sponsored negotiations between Lebanon and Israel began on December 28, 1982, the fighting in Tripoli escalated, Prime Minister al-Wazzan found it strange that despite all the efforts exerted at the highest levels to calm down the situation in Tripoli, cease fires did not last for long, and the conditions became worse and the fighting more severe.²⁷ Syria was trying to undermine the Lebanese – Israeli negotiations, which had just started. The Syrian *Tishrin* newspaper stated on January 3, 1983, that the Lebanese – Israeli negotiations (see Appendix-5) “aimed to make Lebanon a hostage to the will of both the United State and Israel and to expand the Camp David process via the normalization of Israeli – Arab relations”. Former Prime Minister Karami telephoned, on January 2, 1983, the Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam and told him “not all the news you had received were true, the situation in the city [Tripoli] was dependent upon the stand taken by Jabal Muhsin [where the Alawis reside]... send us someone with the mandate to stop the deterioration immediately.” Karami added that the conflict was not

and should not be “between Tripoli and Syria and that is why I am still calling upon his excellency President Hafez Asad who is capable of ending the sedition.” The next day the Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq al – Wazzan, contacted the Syrian Prime Minister and al Ra’uf al –Kasm, “requesting Syrian help to end the tragic situation in Tripoli”. On January 4, 1983, Rashid Karami visited Damascus and met President Asad who confirmed Syria’s willingness to give the city of Tripoli all the support it needed, to save it from the “conspiracy” that had been hatched against it. While Asad was receiving Karami in Damascus, a news reporter wrote of “the gates of Hell which opened in Tripoli... and the circle of fire and shells which besieged its people, victims of hunger, cold weather and fear, because of the lack of fuel, bread, water, electricity and telephone, without anyone being able to assist them.”

All groups in Tripoli had called for the “evacuation from the city and its outskirts of the deterrent forces [Syrian troops] and all armed organizations, Lebanese and non – Lebanese, and the handing over of security to the legitimate government i.e., the army and the internal security forces.”²⁸ This was precisely what Asad meant by conspiracy: “any request from Tripoli for the deterrent forces [Syrian troops] to move out of Tripoli and the north would be viewed by Syria as a conspiracy against it... every time the pressure of the Tripoli request increases

groups in Tripoli supportive of Syria [the Alawis of Ba'l Muhsin] explode the situation.”

Some leading politicians like former President Camille Chamoun openly accused Syria of being behind the ongoing conflict in Tripoli.²⁹ The Sunni deputy, Abduh Uwaydat, called for the Lebanese government to save Tripoli because the Syrian troops of the ADF had become “a force of occupation” and had to be withdrawn back to Syria.

Syria and the Hizbullah

Asad also tapped a new source, namely the Iranian volunteers who, in agreement with the Iranian Defense Minister, were sent to Lebanon, on June 10, 1982, to fight the Israeli occupation. Hussain Al –Mussawi left Amal and formed the Islamic Amal in protest against the leader of Amal, Nabih Birri, who had joined the Salvation committee (*Lajnat al – Inqadh*) former on June 14, 1982. similarly, the representative of Amal in Tehran, Ibrahim Amin Al –Sayyid, also broke away from Amal.

In September 1982, two thousand Iranian volunteers arrived by air to Syria and were swiftly moved to northern Biqa’ where the nucleus of Hizbullah was formed out of the secedes from Amal.²⁹ The first public activities of Hizbullah and the Iranian revolutionary Guards

was the seizure of the town hall in Ba'albak by an estimated five hundred masked supporters of the Iranian Revolution and the storming of the Lebanese Army barracks in Ba'albak on the eve of the anniversary of Lebanese independence, November 22, 1982. The attackers tore down all the Lebanese flags and the portraits of the President of Lebanon.³⁰

Thus the authority of President Gemayel and his government was being challenged in the Alay and al-Shif regions in Mount Lebanon in the city of Tripoli, and in the Northern Biqa region. The orchestrate of these conflicts, the Syrian President Asad, sent a cable on the same day to President Gemayel congratulating him on the anniversary of Lebanon's independence and wishing "the Lebanese people what they yearn for, in security, progress and prosperity." This was typical of Asad's duplicitous behavior: sending a cable of felicitations to President Gemayel on Lebanese Independence day while concomitantly unleashing his new instrument of terrorism. Hizbullah, to attack the Lebanese Army barracks in Ba'albak and tear down the Lebanese Flag; the symbol of that independence. Asad's message on the ground was loud and clear.

As the fourth round of talks between Lebanon and Israel took place, on January 6, 1983, the Lebanese Prime Minister al-Wazzan visited Damascus, on January 8, 1983, and met Asad to discuss ending the conflict in Tripoli, and the Lebanese – Israeli negotiations. He was

reassured of the Syrian stand especially with respect to withdrawal of foreign troops, and he had clearly stated that Lebanon did not put the Syrian withdrawal on the same level as that of the Israeli withdrawal.

The basic flaw of the Lebanese foreign policy toward Syria was rooted in the misconception that Asad would withdraw his troops from Lebanon when Israel and Lebanon reached an agreement for the withdrawal of Israeli troops. The truth was the opposite of that premise: first, as long as the Israeli troops were in Lebanon, the balance of power on the ground would be favorable to Lebanon, and thus there will be a greater chance for Syrian troops to withdraw, while if Israeli troops were pulled out, then the balance of power would be favorable to Syria; second, President Gemayel and his advisors misinterpreted Asad's objective in Lebanon, and did not realize that Asad had no intention of removing his troops from Lebanon voluntarily. The deception practiced by Asad was continuous.

President Gemayel tried to inform Asad of the progress of the Lebanese -Israeli negotiations, by telephoning him on January 15, 1983, and sending his envoy Jean Ubayd the following day. However this did not make Asad soften his stand and in fact had the opposite effect. The Syrian media claimed, on January 20, 1983, that the Lebanese - Israeli negotiations were not simply an internal Lebanese matter but to a

large extent a Syrian concern. If the stations of early warning were to be located on Lebanese soil, cautioned the official Syrian Ba'th newspaper, then it would lead to a loss of Lebanese sovereignty all over Lebanon and would constitute a threat to Syria.³¹ Syria and the PLO (which still had thousands of fighters in northern Lebanon) continued to reassure Lebanon that it would evacuate its troops from Lebanon. Prime Minister al – Wazzan claimed on February 8, 1983, that he had received written assurances from both Asad and Arafat to that effect. There is no evidence, however, that these written assurances ever existed,³² or that Asad and Arafat were willing to live up to their promises. The Israelis had a better understanding of Asad's goals at the time, and the head of the Israeli delegation negotiating with Lebanon. David Kimche, stated that “the Syrians did not intend to evacuate from Lebanon.”³³

Syrian Efforts to undermine Lebanon-Israel Peace Negotiations

As the negotiations between Lebanon and Israel proceeded, the fighting between Junblat's Druze militia and the Christian Lebanese Forces intensified. On January 30 and again on February 4, 1983, Syria ally Junblat shelled the coastal Matn area and Christian east Beirut. Thus Syria relentlessly kept the pressure on President Gemayel and his government to prevent Lebanon from signing an agreement with Israel. President Gemayel had weakened his position vis-à-vis both Asad and

Arafat, by sending them his envoys and meeting Asad at the Non – Aligned conference in New Delhi on March 9-10, 1983, to get their support. Simultaneously he shunned direct contacts with high –ranking Israeli officials whose backing he would have needed to end the continued occupation of the northern Bīqā' valley and northern Lebanon by the Syrian army and the PLO fighters. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defence Minister at the time, put it bluntly to Pierre Gemayel, the Phalangist leader. He “doubted whether his son Amin Gemayel would remain President if he continued to receive orders from Syria, the PLO and Saudi Arabia. In other words, Amin Gemayel was not listening to, let alone coordinating with, the Israelis in order to achieve his goals.

The negotiations between Lebanon and Israel could have led to three outcomes: first, it was possible that no agreement would be signed, and that the Israeli troops would stay indefinitely in Lebanon. His outcome would have been welcomed by Asad because he could then have justified the continued presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon and claim publicly that Israel had no intention of ever leaving Lebanon. Second, an agreement that Israel supported enthusiastically could have been reached. This would have been the worse scenario for Asad because Israel then could have forced the Syrian troops and the PLO fighters to evacuate Lebanon, and the latter would have become sovereign and independent

again. Third, an agreement could have been signed, which Israel would have deemed unsatisfactory and non-implementable. This option would have been the ideal situation for Asad because he would then have had a cause to mobilize his usually subservient politicians and militia leaders against the Lebanese government that signed the agreement. More significantly, as Israel would not have been satisfied with the agreement it would not have exerted any effort to defend it. Thus from Asad's point of view, a well orchestrated military campaign against the Lebanese government could force it to abrogate the agreement, without necessarily antagonizing Israel so that it did not feel compelled to intervene on behalf of the Lebanese government. Only a Lebanese –Israeli agreement that included full normalization between the two – countries would be worth defending from Israel's point of view.

As the negotiations between Lebanon and Israel were moving toward an agreement by early April 1983, Asad increased his pressure. Utilizing his new instrument of fundamentalism, Hizbullah, Asad ordered the blowing up of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, on April 18, 1983, which resulted in the death of forty nine people and the injury of over a hundred people. The objective of carrying out such a fundamentalist operation was to undermine the U.S. sponsored negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, and putting an end to the role

of Multi – National Force (MNF), which included a large contingent of U.S. marines. The United States also began to train the Lebanese Army in December 1982, the latter could have become a force that Syria would have had to contend with. The U.S. officer in charge of training the Lebanese Army claimed, in June 1983, that within six or seven months of training, the Lebanese Army would be capable of controlling all of Lebanon.³⁴

Asad had to act swiftly to undermine the role of the United States in bolstering the Lebanese state. Typical of Asad's style of deception and lies, the Syrian government – controlled press accused the implausible other, namely Israel, of being behind the fundamentalist operation against the U.S. Embassy on April 18. In a revealing example of pure psychological projection, the Syrian newspapers preposterously claimed that Israel executed the operation first, to push the American public to pressure the U.S. administration to pull out its contingent from the MNF. Second, to hamper the ongoing negotiations between Lebanon and Israel. These were precisely Asad's motives in ordering this extremist operation. The Syrian newspaper *Tishrin*, claimed that only the Mossad had the capacity to undertake such an operation.³⁵

During this time when the US targets were chosen inside Lebanon a large number of casualties were reported. The tragedies

favoured none though there were temporary beneficiaries from all the parties while Lebanon remained in turmoil.

As the negotiations were coming to a fruitful end, the Syrians escalated the violence against regions controlled by the Lebanese government. The violence during May 5-8, 1983, included fighting in the Shouf and Alay regions and the shelling of the northern and upper Matn as well as the Greater Beirut area. President Gemayel asked the commander of the Lebanese Army, Ibrahim Tannus, to get in touch with the Syrian Chief of Staff, Hikmat al-Shihabi, to stop the shelling, which was originating from Syrian – controlled areas.³⁶ But Asad's extremists and military campaign in Lebanon continued unabated.³⁷

When the full text of the Lebanese – Israeli Agreement was given to Asad during a visit to Damascus by Foreign Minister Salem, on May 12, Asad called it “a peace treaty harmful to Lebanon, to Syria, and to the Arab world.”³⁸ After that visit Foreign Minister Salem returned to Lebanon in a military helicopter, and gave a statement about his discussions in Damascus to the waiting journalists, ending it on ominous prophetic note “god help Lebanon.”³⁹

There was an obvious difference between what Amin Gemayel and his foreign minister were saying about Syria, namely that

they were willing to keep the dialogue going with Syrian officials, and what Asad's goal was, namely to dominate Lebanon through military means.⁴⁰ On the other hand, President Gemayel and his government were unable to get the support of Israelis, let alone have televised meetings with them, which made the Israelis "furious."⁴¹ It was ironic that Amin Gemayel and his government were talking, at the highest level, with Syria, which was bent on wrecking the Lebanese –Israeli Agreement and on dominating Lebanon again, while simultaneously shunning Israeli high officials who were instrumental in liberating Lebanon from the PLO forces and the Syrian Army in the southern half of the country including Beirut. There were other misconceptions held by Lebanese officials who believed that Syria would evacuate its troops from Lebanon after Israel pulled out its troops. Former President Chamoun, who was not in power then, understood Asad's modus operandi, and stated, on May 9, 1983, that he expected "the Syrians would reject any Lebanese –Israeli Agreement shown to them because they need a pretext to refuse to pull out their troops from Lebanon."⁴²

The rejection of the Lebanese –Israeli Agreement by Arafat in a meeting of the PLO's executive committee, held in Damascus on May 8-9, 1983, did not save Arafat's PLO from becoming Asad's next target. The Syrian leaders unleashed the dissident PLO factions against

Arafat, who was declared a *persona non grata* in Syria and had to leave Damascus on June 24, 1983.⁴³ These two campaigns were a clear message to Israel that Asad was willing to push Arafat's PLO out from the rest of Lebanon, if the Israelis could in turn forget about the Lebanese – Israeli Agreement

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, regarded Syria as the main obstacle to the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon. However, after the attack on the PLO, he expressed, on June 29, 1983, a favorable opinion about the Syrian attempt to control the PLO saying it may facilitate the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon. Thus Shultz also misconstrued the goal of the Syrian offensive against the PLO. When he met Asad on July 6, 1983, in Damascus and asked his support for the Lebanese –Israeli Agreement, he was unable to change Asad's position as the latter rejected it in too.

Asad pursued his objective of dominating Lebanon, by appealing to the anti –Israel sentiment that pervaded the Arab world, and portraying President Gemayel and his government as “agents” of Israel, and also that the Lebanese government “represented the Government of Menachem Begin.”⁴⁴ When the Lebanese Parliament approved the Lebanese –Israeli Agreement on June 14, 1983, by sixty – five votes, against two votes, and four abstentions, the Syria mass media raised

questions about the legitimacy of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.⁴⁵ The Syrian media continued its smear campaign against the Lebanese government by depicting its decision as devoid of Legitimacy.⁴⁶ Syria rallied its allies, Walid Junblat and Nahib Birri, who visited Damascus on July 4, 1983, and after intensive meetings with Syrian officials rejected the Lebanese –Israeli Agreement, and confirmed the complete support of the Lebanese people against the Israeli occupation. The also rejected the deployment of the Lebanese Army in the mountain regions of the Shauf and Alay after an expected Israeli withdrawal.⁴⁷

Shelling reached a crescendo during President Gemayel's visit to the United States in July, 1983 leaving tens of dead and wounded, mostly civilians. Syria accused the implausible other, in this case the Lebanese government for the eruption in fighting. It claimed that the government was attempting "to cover up the project for the partition of Lebanon".

To undermine Gemayel's visit to the United States, Syria released the acting President of the American University of Beirut, David Dodge, on July 21, 1983, the only American hostage then, who had been kidnapped, on July 19, 1982, by Hizbullah. President Reagan had to thank Asad for his humanitarian efforts. This embarrassed President

Gemayel who had been trying to get the full support of the United States for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

It was also during Gemayel's official visit to the United States that the Syrian – sponsored National Salvation Front was officially proclaimed by Walid Junblat, on July 23, 1983, in the Syrian –occupied town of Ba'alba Junblat did not mince his words when he stated that the National Salvation Front's aim was to confront President Gemayel and his government. He spoke of the Syrian –controlled northern and eastern regions of Lebanon as liberated area."⁴⁸ The Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam fully endorsed the National Salvation Front and affirmed that Syria would "give support to any Lebanese who was working to save Lebanon from the Israeli occupation and the Phalangist factional hegemony."⁴⁹

Asad tried to draw the peacekeeping Multi-National Force's Mission (MNF) into the conflict, Pro-Syrian militias attacked the U.S. Marines on August 28 and fought with them for ninety minutes. Heavy fighting and shelling took place on August 29 and led to the first American casualties, two marines killed and fourteen wounded.⁵⁰ Asad's tactic was simple to attack the MNF, particularly the US and French forces, and when they responded, accused them of taking sides against the Druze and Shi'i militias that had attacked them in the first place.

The Syrian media accused the Lebanese Army, the Phalangist Party and the U.S. marines of shelling West Beirut. They called for the imposition of “deterrent Arab penalties against the partisan Lebanese authorities.”⁵¹ These Syrian media attacks were voiced on the eve of sending an official letter from the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Elie Salem, based on a decision by the Lebanese cabinet, to secretary general of the League of Arab States, demanding the withdrawal of both Syrian and PLO troops from Lebanon. President Gemayel had also sent an official letter to President Asad asking him to withdraw his troops.⁵²

The Geneva-Lausanne Conference,

In 1983, the signing of the Lebanese – Israeli May 17th Agreement left the Lebanese government in a predicament. The agreement had the support the United States, but was rejected by majority of Lebanese and strongly opposed by several Arab countries, especially Syria. To deal with the impasse, President Gemayel accepted a Saudi-Syrian initiative and formed a Committee for National Reconciliation composed of himself and nine other prominent political figures. Politically, the participants were divided into four blocs: the Front for National Salvation (Rashid Karamesh, Suleiman Frangieh, and Walid Jumblatt), the Lebanese Front (Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel),

The Amal Movement (Nabih Birri), and independents (Saeb Salam, Adel Osseiran, and Raymond Edde). With the exception of Nabih Birri (Leader of the Amal militia) and Walid Jumblatt (who had succeeded his father as leader of the Progressive Socialist Party), the appointed members were longstanding veterans of the Lebanese establishment. Representatives from Syria and Saudi Arabia were also invited to attend. The participants were to discuss issues concerning Lebanon's identity, Israel's occupation, comprehensive reform measures and the role of the military.⁵³

From the outset, the Geneva meeting was stalemated. The Muslim participants and Frangieh, with encouragement from the Syrian representative, insisted on the abrogation of the May 17th Agreement and on forcing Israel's withdrawal before attending to Lebanon's domestic conflict issues. The Israeli – Lebanese agreement was portrayed as impairing Syrian security interests and unacceptable on political grounds. Moreover, it appeared doubtful that any parallel Agreement would reassure Syrians that they would be better off by leaving than staying. The accord came to symbolize for Syria and the Lebanese opposition the political advantages gained by the Phalangists as a result of the Israeli invasion. At the Geneva national reconciliation talks, Syrian backed opposition leaders called for renegotiation of the agreement. Given domestic pressures in Israel to speed a pullout of the Israel Defence Force

(IDF) from Lebanon, the government appeared ready to negotiate the timing of withdrawal. But Syria was adamant that the accord should be formally abrogated and new security arrangements be negotiated to assure the protection of Lebanon's identity and sovereignty. The National Assembly of Lebanon, under pressure from Syria and Muslim militias, cancelled the May 17th Agreement on 5 March 1984.

During the Lausanne meeting convened following the abrogation of the May 17th Agreement in March 1984, two visions of Lebanon were discussed. Members of the Lebanese Front proposed the establishment of a federal system composed of confessionally homogeneous units. Muslim participants submitted a joint settlement plan that proposed elimination of political sectarianism, administrative decentralization, limiting the powers of the President and expanding the powers of the Council of Ministers. Clearly, the leadership of the Lebanese Front was demanding political decentralization (a federal system) to counter the demands of the Muslim leadership for the elimination of political sectarianism. (Abolishment political sectarianism would undermine the Maronite leaders' privileged status in the political system and relegate them to a minority position). Similarly, Muslim participants were demanding the complete elimination of the sectarian system to counter the Maronite establishment's resistance to any reform.

During the deliberations, it became evident that agreement was possible on a broad number of necessary reforms. Unfortunately, differences over the relative powers of the President, on the one hand, and the Council of Ministers and Prime Minister, on the other, prevented participants from approving an accord that could have settled the civil war. On this issue, participants divided along religious lines.⁵⁴

The Geneva-Lausanne Conference was the only forum that Lebanon's leading political figures attended in person, and in which they had an opportunity to fully articulate their positions in uninterrupted negotiations. This occasion was also the closest that Lebanese leaders ever came to reaching an agreement. Although the conference disbanded without adopting a mutually acceptable agreement-testimony to the continued strength of sectarian rivalries and suspicions-the common ground between the various factions has expanded.

The Damascus Tripartite Agreement, 28 December 1985

The deadlock reached at Lausanne signaled an end to hopes for national dialogue and reconciliation at the hands of the traditional elite. Lebanon's most prominent oligarchs proves unable, or unwilling, to make the concessions required resolving internal differences. In the aftermath of the Lausanne conference, fighting erupted on many fronts

and among various factions, including former allies. Syria attempted a new approach to peacemaking. The leaders of the three major militias, Elie Hobeiga (Lebanese Forces), Nabih Birri (Amal), and Walid Jumblatt (PSP), met in Damascus to negotiate a settlement plan.

The resulting Tripartite Agreement departed radically from former peace plans in several areas, especially in its call for the abolition of the sectarian system and for the definition of a special relationship with Syria.⁵⁵ Following a transitional period, the sectarian system of representation in the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government would be totally abolished. Even the three highest offices—President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the Parliament—would no longer be apportioned on a sectarian basis. A Senate would be created, and each *mohafazah* would become an electoral district. With respect to Syria, the agreement considered the establishment of distinctive relations with Syria to be the test of Lebanon’s “Arabism” and called for strategic complementarity between the two countries.

The Tripartite Agreement, however, was short-lived. Two weeks after its signing, Samir Ja’ Ja’ led a rebellion that removed Elie Hobeiga from the leadership of the Lebanese Forces, and annulled the accord. Nevertheless, the plan’s two new elements (phased abolition of

sectarianism and special relations with Syria) became key issues that any future settlement would have to address.

On 22 October 1989, the Lebanese Parliament adopted the Document of National Understanding, better known as the Ta'if Accord. Gradually, institution of the state revived and a measure of stability and peace reappeared.

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CHAPTER-5

CHAPTER –V

Ta'if Accord and Its Aftermath

The Ta'if Accord, also known as the Charter of National Reconciliation, signed on October 22, 1989, in the city of Ta'if in Saudi Arabia occupies an important place in the history of modern Lebanon (see Appendix-6). It took fifteen years of incessant fighting and destruction of the country before a settlement agreement was implemented.

It symbolizes the end of the tumultuous civil war (1975 – 1989) that turned Lebanon into a daily violent new item. It also symbolizes Syria's success to impose the Syrian order upon Lebanon and turn it for all means and purposes into a protectorate following a long struggle with the various Lebanese rival factions.

Before the Ta'if Accord, every peace making effort collapsed due to various factors including the combinations of international, regional and the internal one. External powers had used Lebanese groups to promote their own interests. At the same time, Lebanese factions had exploited Arab government infighting to forge

external alliances to support their political and military programme. It demonstrates that Lebanese war was a series of proxy wars.²

In the earlier peace attempts, domestically, traditional mechanisms for dealing with the conflict were unable to contain the interlocking conflict issues during the 1967 – 1975 period. When the war started, these issues became even more irresolvable because Lebanon's traditional elite became marginalized and the number of armed domestic actors (and their regional sponsors) began to burgeon.³

In the aftermath of the eruption of violence in 1975, Lebanese leaders were faced with these alternative courses of action relating to internal political reform: preservation of the status quo, abolition of the sectarian system, or adoption of reform measures that would allow for some re-adjustment of power – sharing arrangements. First alternative was totally impractical as it would not help to solve the problem in the light of the fundamental socio – economic and demographic realities. Implementation of the second alternative in a crisis atmosphere proved to be unrealistic. The third alternative which called for a negotiated compromise eluded the feuding parties until the Ta'if accord.

The 1989 Ta'if Agreement symbolized a juncture in the Republic of Lebanon's political existence. When compared to previous attempts at ending the civil conflict, the Ta'if Agreement not only encompassed all facets of the economic and political set up of the country but was also blessed with favourable international and regional circumstances. The Arab League Committee of six was activated in January 1989. At the Casablanca Summit meeting of the Arab League on 25-26 May, a Tripartite High Commission consisting of President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, and King Hussain II of Morocco was created to chart out a plan to resolve the Lebanese problem. Specifically, the mandate of the triumvirate, with the help of the Arab League's indefatigable assistant secretary – general, former Algerian foreign affairs minister Lakhdas Ibrahimi, was to facilitate the election of a new Lebanese president and promote the adoption of presidential reforms.⁴

The Ta'if accord was not radically different from previous attempts to reform the Lebanese political system. The most serious attempts to settle the conflict were the National Dialogue Committee (1975), the Constitutional Document (1976), the Arab Summit Conferences at Riyadh and Cairo (1976), the Geneva – Lausanne Conference (1983, 1984) and the Damascus Tripartite Agreement (1985).

Many of the features of the accord were anticipated by the Constitutional Document accepted by the President Franjiyah in 1976 and the Tripartite Agreement of 1985, both of which were mediated by Syria. In this way the Ta'if Accord is rooted in a well established "tradition" that renders Lebanon more of a contractual consociative counting than one based on a Constitution.⁵

In fact, as Kamal Salibi has stated, "there are no major differences in essence between the National Pact of 1943 and Ta'if" Moreover, "the philosophy behind the Ta'if Agreement and the way it was achieved was Lebanese. It was a Lebanese formula similar to the formula that was born in 1943."⁶ However, the accord is seen as a process and not a definite settlement. Another characteristic of the accord is that the signatories were not belligerents in the war unlike other peace attempts.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council had expressed support for the accord on 31 October 1989 while the Legislature, the Chamber of Deputies approved constitutional reforms based on the Ta'if Agreement on 21 August 1990.

Constitutional Reforms

The Ta'if accord contains a number of important principles on which the Lebanese state is built.

Domestically, there are many important points to be noted that in a statement of general philosophy, the accord reendorses that Lebanon is a country where various communities co-exist. It again sets forth the basic principles like independence, unity, sovereignty, a liberal, parliamentary democracy, Arabness and the definite nature of a "Lebanese homeland for all her sons". There is a structural regulation in the document which reads as follows: "There shall be no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the pact of communal co-existence".⁷

Regarding to institutions, the controversial aspect of the accord was the elevation President of the Chamber of Deputies, thereby an office, the President, traditionally reserved for a Maronite. The terms of the Speaker which is customarily reserved for a Shiite Muslims, and the nomination of the Prime Minister would be consulted by the Speaker as well.

Seats in the parliament were equally distributed between Christian and Muslims. Thus in the 108 seat parliament a 54 – 54 seat balance was maintained between Christian and Muslims. The pre-eminence of the presidential post which is the symbol of the political predominance of the Maronites became a thing of the past.⁸ Shiite Muslims which is the third largest community compromised in foavour of Sunni Muslims where they equalled in the number of seats in parliament. Likewise the Alawi community gained two seats in parliament. The confessional distribution of Lebanese parliament is given in table 2.

Table -2: Confessional Division of the Lebanese parliament

		1972*	1989 Ta'if	1990
		Parliament	accord	Vacancies
Confession				
Christians				
	Maronite	30	30	12**
	Orthodox	11	11	4
	Catholic	6	6	0
	Armenian	4	4	0
Orthodox				
	Armenian	1	1	1
Catholic				
	Protestant	1	1	0
	Other***	1	1	0
	Subtotal	54	54	17
Muslim				
	Sunni's	20	22	5
	Shia	19	22	3
	Druze	6	8	5
	Alawi	0	2	0
	Subtotal	45	54	13
	Total	99	108	30

Source: See Augustus Richard Norton, "Lebanon after Ta'if, Is the Civil War Over", Middle East Journal, vol., 45, No. 3, Summer 1991, p. 463.

* Although the last general election was held in 1972, the last parliamentary election was actually in 1974 when Rafiq Shahin won a by- election in Nabatiyya.

** Maronite deputy Fuad Tihini of the Shuf died after implementation of the accord in September 1990 and he is not included in the total vacancies shown.

*** This seat was held by Farid Jibran, a Roman Catholic affiliated with the (Druze) Progressive Socialist Party.

The question of sectarianism has always dominated the Lebanese political scene.⁹ The Ta'if accord went a bit further by suggesting certain steps for its gradual termination. For example the accord's text terminated certain criteria for recruitment of public servants,

except for posts at high levels. Mentioning of religion on identity cards also was stopped.

The Ta'if accord deals with important security and foreign policy provisions. The security plan's ultimate aim is for the state to "extend its authority over all the territory of Lebanon by means of its own forces", although Syrian forces "shall assist the legitimate Lebanese forces" in this task.¹⁰

The Ta'if Accord and the Withdrawal of External Forces

The accord also talks about Lebanon's relation with Syria. Two years after the adoption of constitutional reforms, Syrian forces should redeploy to the Biqa Valley. A Lebanese – Syrian agreement would determine the size of the remaining Syrian forces staying on Lebanese soil. The accord also called for the establishment of "privileged relations" vis-à-vis Syria. Lebanon and Syria are expected to maintain close relations "in all area".¹¹ The Ta'if accord states that the Tripartite Arab High Commission would assist the two governments in concluding this agreement. It talks about Lebanon's relations with Israel also. The Accord demands the implementation of UN Resolution 425 that demands the withdrawal of Israeli troops.¹²

Syrian Influence

There were 40,000 Syrian soldiers and assorted secret service agents in Lebanon. Although, Syrian troops were not accepted as a permanent fixture in the Lebanese landscape, an armed Syrian presence was seen as a necessary condition for proceeding with the implementation of certain of the Ta'if accord's provisions, especially disbandment of the militias.¹⁴

Moreover, Lebanese political leadership always followed the shadow of Syria and never took any action without consulting Syrian President Hafiz al- Assad.¹⁵

Early Achievements of Ta'if Accord

Despite skepticism both in Lebanon and outside regarding the government's ability to tackle the challenging task of implementing the provisions of Ta'if Accord, there were remarkable achievements.

The important achievements were:

Elimination of General Awn's opposition, in October 1990; unification of the Lebanese army in October/November 1990, establishment of a security zone in Greater Beirut; free of all militias (December 1990), formation of a new Cabinet of reconciliation under

Omar Karami in December 1990, cessation of hostilities between the Amal and the Hizbullah and the replacement of fighters by army units in South Lebanon in February 1991, disbandment of all militias except PLO and Hizbullah (May 1991), formalization of the distinctive relationship between Lebanon and Syria through the signing of the “Treaty of Fraternity, Cooperation and Coordination’ in May 1991, and the replacement of PLO fighters by the Lebanese Army in South Lebanon in July 1991.

The Ta’if accord received wide international support, including the USA, the erstwhile Soviet Union, Britain and France. But General Michel Awn, the Christian leader and appointed interim Prime Minister in 1988, had set up a rebel government in east Beirut and declared ‘War of Liberation’.¹⁶ He refused to accept the Ta’if accord by denouncing it as a betrayal of Lebanese sovereignty.¹⁷ He accused that it did not contain a definite time table for a complete Syrian withdrawal from Lebanese territory.¹⁸

General Awn received the support of some Christian factions. He attempted to impose political control over the Christian militias by ordering his forces to close all the barracks of the Lebanese Forces (LF) in east Beirut.¹⁹

In October 1990, the government with Syrian support took military action to remove him by force. General Awn was defeated and had to take refuge in the French Embassy in Beirut. But the government did not allow him to leave for France, as he was charged with embezzlement of public funds and crimes against the state.²⁰ Finally in August 1991 the government allowed him to leave for France.

Lebanon – Syria Treaty of May 1991

The signing of the Treaty of Fraternity, Cooperation and Coordination between Syria and Lebanon was a significant development.²¹ The treaty declared that Syria and Lebanon had ‘distinctive brotherly relations’, based on their ‘geographic propinquity, similar history, common belonging, shared destiny and common interests’.²²

The Lebanese Forces (LF) and the Phalangist Party opposed the treaty, while internationally, Israel criticized the excessive Syrian influence over Lebanon.²³

In the backdrop of the particular political situation after Gulf War (Syrian participation in the anti-Iraq coalition), Syria was given more or less free hand in Lebanon.²⁴ The new treaty legitimized Syria’s defacto control over Lebanon by formalizing the deployment of Syrian

troops in designated locations in Lebanon. It has been the first time for Syria to recognize Lebanon as an independent political entity, and the prospect opened up for peace and political stability.

Ta'if and the Parliament

The last general elections prior to Ta'if accord was held in 1972. Though frail and diminished in numbers by natural and unnatural deaths, Parliament played its constitutional role by electing Rene Muawwad President in 1989 and following his assassination, seventeen days later, elected Elias Hrawi to the office.²⁵

As part of the Ta'if accord, number of deputies were increased from 99 to 108 and equally split between Muslims and Christians.²⁶ There were forty vacant seats in the Parliament due to death or resignation. The Ta'if accord included a provision for an exceptional procedure to fill the vacant parliamentary seats, namely, the appointment of deputies".²⁷

Interestingly, appointment of deputies to an elected body seemed to be anomalous, but no one questioned the need to reactivate parliament. Some feared that 'appointive deputies' may represent vested interests.

Proposals for holding by polls²⁸ were put forward as an alternative to the 'appointment of deputies', arguing that, if conducted with integrity, would lead Ta'if process to genuine national rapprochement. Due to Syrian disinterest, holding of by elections was shelved, as they feared that it would undermine their influence in Lebanon.²⁹ On 9 May 1991, forty deputies were appointed in the midst of an increased domestic resentment and criticism against the appointments.

Ta'if and the Electoral Process

Surprisingly, Syria started initiating the discussion for elections by early 1992. An explanation to this was that Syria wanted to ensure a complaint legislative body prior to the Syrian redeployment as mandated by the Ta'if Accord.³⁰

Ta'if Accord provided for a new electoral law on the basis of the six provinces: the North, Beirut, the Biqa, Mount Lebanon, the South and Nabatieh. Treating the six provinces as electoral constituencies was intended to ensure:

- (a) Co-existence among the Lebanese communities
- (b) Political representation for all classes and age groups in the population

(c) And the effectiveness of that representation.³¹

The electoral law also increased seats in the Parliament from 108 to 128, the twenty additional seats being shared equally between the leading Christian and Muslim seats.³² The allocation of the 128 seats is shown in the table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of seats in parliament Total seats 128:64 Christians,
64 Muslims

Christian		Muslims	
Sects	Seats	Sects	Seats
Maronite	34	Sunni	27
Greek	14	Shii	27
Orthodox			
Greek Catholic	6	Druze	8
Armenian	6	Alawi	2
Other	4		
Christians			
Total	64	Total	64
Total seats = 128			

Source: Data drawn from Augustus Richard Morton and Jillian Schwedler, "Swiss soldiers, Ta'if Clocks and Early Elections", in Deirdre Collings, *Peace for Lebanon* (London, 1994), p. 52.

The Parliamentary Elections 1992

Christians factions opposed holding of the elections before Syrian redeployment, as they would influence the outcome. However, Lebanese government, pliant to Syrian interests, neither postponed the elections nor requested an international monitoring. Government went ahead with the preparations for elections, by August 1992.

Lebanon uses a list system for elections whereby the elector casts his or her ballot for multiple candidates. For example, in the constituency of Aley, five seats are at stake: two for Maronites, one for Greek Orthodox, and two for Druze. The elector, therefore, casts a total of five votes, allocated respectively, among the Druze, Maronite, and Orthodox candidates. To ensure victory, candidates try to assemble (or join) a slate that will appeal across confessional lines. While voters are not obliged to cast their votes for an entire slate, they often do.³³

The 1992 elections illustrated the extent of Syrian presence as well as that intensified the anti-Syrian sentiments, especially Christian Maronite. They called for the boycott of the Syrian – steered election process. But government was of the view that elections should be held before the Syrian forces' pullout as the Lebanese army had not got a firm grip over the whole of the country.³⁴

In the event, the boycott was a remarkable technical success, although the wisdom of the boycott was questioned privately, by some Lebanese Christians, who note that the boycott provided a Parliamentary membership skewed in Syria's favour and with previous little scope for the active protections of civil rights.³⁵

Pro-Syrian candidates gained considerably, owing to the excessive Syrian influence coupled with the Christian boycott. The turnout was very high in Muslim areas while it was low in Christian area.³⁶ The religious affiliations of the deputies elected to the parliament are given in table 4.

Table -4: Religious groups in the Parliament (General Election, 23 August, 30 August, 6 September and 11 October 1992.

Maronite Catholics	3
Sunni Muslim	27
Shi'a Muslims	27
Greek Orthodox	14
Druze	8
Greek – Melkite Catholics	6
Armenian Orthodox	5
Alawites	2
Armenian Catholics	1
Protestant	1
Others	3
Total	128

Source: The Middle East and North Africa, London: Europe Publications, 42nd edition, 1996, p. 669.

Rafik Hariri Takes Over

With election of the new Parliament, first ever since 1972, on 22 October, 1992, Rafik Hariri, a Sidon born multibillionaire businessman, was invited to form the government by President Hrawi. Amal movement leader Nabih Berri was the elected speaker, traditionally reserved for a Shiite.³⁷

Since the Ta'if Accord, the most challenging task faced by the government was the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-torn Lebanon. The economy was completely devastated. As the attempts by the previous governments at the economic reconstruction were more or less ineffective, it was Rafik Hariri's task to formulate a new plan of reinvigoration of the economy.³⁸

Harri's appointment was greeted by a surge of confidence in the Lebanese pound, unprecedented since the currency started its free fall in the mid-1980s.³⁹ His top priority was to tackle the budget.

Politically, Prime Minister Hariri found himself in a volatile and fluid conflictual situation. The flare up of violence between Hizbullah forces and Israel in the South indicated that the new government had to settle the difficult problem of reconciling its aim of

disarming all militias with the desire to regain sovereignty over the whole of the country.⁴⁰

However, Harir achieved a popularity unmatched by any Lebanese politician for many years on the basis of his reputation for honesty and effective management, the fact that he had no connection to Lebanon's traditional political class, and in the expectation that he can deliver some kind of miracle cure to Lebanon's ills.⁴¹

The question of the re-election of president was another contentious issue when President Elias Hrawi was retiring in November 1995. The election invoked controversy because of the presence of two interests: one was the extension of Hrawi's term and, second was Army Commander, Emile Lahoud's intention to contest. But according to the constitution, Clause two, Article 49 of the constitution, the President should serve a single six years term, which prevents a reelection or extension; Clause three, Article 49 bars public servants of the top rank such as the commander of the army or Governor of the Central Bank from standing for election unless they resign two years in advance.⁴²

However, these speculations were put to an end by the Syrian President's positive not to grant an extension for Hrawi. Thus, through an amendment Hrawi's term was extended for three years.

The Ta'if Accord cannot ensure a long – term peace because the political stability and the rebuilding of its economic base depend on the actors, and more so on their actions than a documents or constitution. However, the accord's provisions lays stress on external and domestic prerequisites to durable peace.⁴³ Externally, Lebanon's stability is inextricably linked to the degree of legitimacy and sovereignty respected by external actors. Domestically, socio-political stability is conditioned by a measure of legitimacy the state derives from its people, i.e. the reestablishment of state authority subsuming the sectoral or communal loyalties.

Lebanon's domestic instability produced a patron client relationship between the external and internal actors. This instability was caused by rapid changes in the socio-economic and demographic spheres combined with rising political discontent and the ideological polarization of the masses. As the Lebanese State was not strong enough to exert influence over its populace, the whole domestic stability was dependent on the solidarity of the power elites and the control they had on their respective constituencies.

The termination of conflict in the wake of the 1989, Accord did not mean that all domestic differences were reconciled or the root of

the problem was resolved. Undoubtedly, the accord created an environment conducive for restoring normalcy and peace in Lebanon.

With regard to Syria's influence, it is considered as a mixed blessing. Although it protects Lebanon from the external penetrations there is a significant section in Lebanon which perceives the Syrian domination with a "conquered" feeling.⁴⁴ However, despite the negative domestic fallout that Syria's presence provokes, its insulating effect has a positive domestic consequence: it allows the Lebanese to focus better on their internal problems.⁴⁵

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44. Indeed, the Lebanese government till date remains hostage to the Syrian diktat.

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CHAPTER - 6

CHAPTER -VI

Conclusion

In the 1970s, various internal tensions inherent to the Lebanese system and multiple regional developments contributed to the breakdown of governmental authority and the outbreak of civil strife in 1975. The cause of the Lebanese civil war was neither exclusively internal nor exclusively external, nor was its settlement. Syria as an external major power had intervened in the Lebanese conflict.

The Syrian role in the Lebanese civil war has to be analysed from the point of view of the developments that had been taking place at the regional level during the two years following the October war. The Egyptian – Israeli disengagement agreement on Sinai in September 1975 left Syria isolated. After the Sinai accord Egypt withdrew from the confrontation against Israeli occupation. The Sinai agreement meant that Egypt could not effectively come to Syria's rescue if war broke out again with Israel. Thus Syria felt particularly vulnerable to an Israeli military attack from across the Golan Heights. However, there was another more serious dangers – the danger of an Arab – Israeli war sparked off by an Israeli invasion of South Lebanon.

Israeli occupation of South Lebanon would increase Syria's strategic vulnerability considerably by providing Israel with new front in any future war. The Israelis could engage the Syrians on the Golan Heights while simultaneously launching an offensive aimed at Damascus through the highly exposed Bekka Valley in Lebanon and the Syrian are incapable of fighting the Israelis on two fronts. The operation of Palestinian guerillas had already provoked a series of Israeli raids into Lebanon and the Syrians feared that if the guerilla operations continued. Israel would use them as a pretext for occupying South Lebanon.

Consequently, the Syrian regime pursued a convoluted course regarding Lebanon. On the one hand, Syria supported the PLO and other Muslim radical elements in Lebanon, which were considered useful as troublemakers against Israel and were also perceived as increasing Syrian influence over events in Lebanon. On the other hand, it seems that Syria would have preferred the political system to remain intact and controllable. Thus, Syria sought to end the Civil War in order to preserve the *status quo*, albeit in a modified form.

Another consideration which shaped Syrian policy towards the Lebanese conflict was the Syrian desire for a peaceful settlement of the Arab – Israeli dispute on the basis of an Israeli withdrawal from more or less all the Arab territories occupied since 1967 and the setting up of an

independent Palestinian state on the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Then, from the Syrian viewpoint, in such a case the need for Syrian intervention in Lebanon became all the more necessary.

And the final consideration that determined Syria's policy towards the civil war was the Syrian belief that Lebanon and Syria are really integral parts of a greater Syria and that the divisions between the two countries was a result of conspiracy hatched by the French to serve their own colonial interests. To Assad the Syrian and Lebanese are one people and it is difficult to draw a line between Lebanon's security in its broadest sense and Syrian security.

All these considerations which underlay Syria's policy towards the Lebanese civil war. The civil war which started with the Ayn al-Rummana massacre passed through five distinct phases. The first phase was characterized by fighting between the Palestinians and the Kataib party, which resulted in a cabinet crisis. The cabinet crisis in turn was transformed into a conflict among Lebanese themselves. It ended with the formation of the six-member 'Salvation Cabinet' of Karami.

The second phase was characterized by a temporary halt in the fighting which lasted until early September 1975 when large-scale fighting broke out and resulted in the destruction of the downtown

commercial area of Beirut. This phase ended with the formation of a twenty-member National Dialogue Committee. The third phase was characterized by the continued efforts to reach an agreement on political reforms.

In the fourth phase the conflict took on a Lebanese – Palestinian character when the Christians started the siege of the Palestinian camps of Tell al-Zatar and Jisr al – Basha. This phase also witnessed an increase in the role of Syrians in trying to bring about a ceasefire. Syrian mediation efforts led to the declaration of the Constitutional Document.

The final phase of the civil-war was characterized by a continued offensive of the National Movement and Palestinians against the Christians who were now on the losing side. In the face of the continued National Movement offensive Christians strong – holds every where began to shrink and for the first time Syria began to give indications that it no longer supported the Muslims and was quite prepared to move against them. The final phase came to an end with the Syrian military intervention on 9 April 1976 against the National Movement and Palestinians.

During the first two years of the war, the balance of forces favored the LNM and their Palestinian allies. They tried to advance their plan but

were unable to impose it, especially after the Syrian military intervention in 1976. By 1977 the LNM forces were in retreat and their ability to influence political events declined, especially after the assassination of Kamal Junblatt in 1977. Gradually, the LNM abandoned its program of political reform and in 1980 began building bridges with the traditional Islamic leadership. The new program that it developed was based on a preservation of the traditional confessional system but with a redistribution of confessional power to reflect demographic and political changes. During the period of 1976 to 1982, the Lebanese state under President Elias Sarkis undertook various initiatives to find a negotiated settlement to the Lebanese conflict, but none succeeded. Meanwhile, the Lebanese Front was gradually strengthening its position and awaiting favorable regional developments to impose its own will.

The Israeli invasion of 1982 dealt a staggering blow to the Palestinians and the LNM and dramatically strengthened the Lebanese Front, bringing its militant leader, Bashir Gemayel, to the presidency. Bashir Gemayel was assassinated within days of his election, and his brother, Amin, was hastily elected in his stead. In the wake of the invasion American involvement in Lebanon grew, aimed mainly at brokering a withdrawal agreement between Lebanon and Israel that, it was hoped, would be a precursor to a fuller peace treaty between the two

countries. However, by 1984, less than two years after the Kata'ib and President Amin Gemayel's coming to power, the Israeli "new order" in Lebanon had all but collapsed. The Lebanese-Israeli agreement initialed on May 17, 1984, ran into strong opposition from Syria, was not ratified and was soon abrogated by the Lebanese government; Israel began withdrawing from most Lebanese territories except a border strip in south Lebanon under the control of Israel's surrogate South Lebanon Army; the Lebanese government turned away from Israel and the U.S. and opened a dialogue with Syria to find a way out of the impasse. Indeed, by 1985, Syria had regained most of the power over Lebanese affairs that it had lost to the Israelis and Americans in 1982.

On another level, internal battles of that period, in the Mountain and Shouf area (1983), in Beirut (1984), and in East Sidon (1985) increased the sectarian character of the Lebanese conflict. Confessional segregation reached its peak and the confessionally-based militias ruled the various regions in closed and semi-closed enclaves. In the Christian areas the militias spread slogans of a "Christian republic," "Christian security," federalism and partition. In the Muslim areas, the emerging radical Islamic movements raised the slogans of an Islamic republic.

In 1983, a meeting in Geneva of representatives from the major Lebanese factions for a national dialogue conference achieved little

progress. They were able to agree on only one issue, the Arab identity of Lebanon. When these representatives met again in Lausanne in 1984, they were not able to make any further progress. In December of 1985, and with the encouragement and support of the Syrians, representatives of the dominant confessional militias, the Christian Lebanese Forces, the Shiite Amal Movement, and the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party, met in Damascus and reached an agreement, known as the Tripartite Agreement, on political reforms and special relations with Syria. However, in early 1986, President Amin Gemayel and Samir Geagea (intelligence chief of the Lebanese Forces) organized a coup against the Lebanese Forces leader Elie Hubayka. Hubayka was ousted from his position as the leader of the Lebanese Forces and the Tripartite agreement as rendered null and void.

A state of political paralysis prevailed in Lebanon between 1986 and the end of President Gemayel's term on September 23, 1988. In fact, Prime Minister Rashid Karami and the cabinet boycotted the President. Karami tendered his resignation as Prime Minister but soon thereafter, on June 1, 1987, was assassinated. Yet, the cabinet continued to function with Salim al-Hoss as acting Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the Lebanese and Syrian governments pursued talks to find an alternative to the Tripartite Agreement. The talks became deadlocked after the

assassination of Karami, but not before agreement on the broad outlines of political reform, relations between Lebanon and Syria, and the position vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. Most of the points agreed upon in these talks found their way into the Taif Agreement of 1989.

At the end of Gemayel's term, in September 1988, the failure to elect a new president led to a political vacuum which threatened to lead to partition. Gemayel appointed an interim cabinet headed by Army commander Michel Aoun, but this cabinet's authority was only accepted in the predominantly Christian areas; in West Beirut and other regions of the country, the original cabinet headed by Salim al-Hoss was regarded as the legitimate one. Executive authority was thus split between the military government of Aoun and the civilian government of Hoss. The two governments stood against each other and each claimed exclusive legitimacy. The legislative authority also experienced a vacuum because the parliament failed to renew the one year term of the speaker or to elect a new one.

The Lebanese conflict had always been linked in significant ways to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The various Lebanese factions had, repeatedly, attempted to exploit their associations with one or another of the conflicting regional parties to promote their own internal interests.

Such associations complicated and prolonged the civil war. Indeed, the polarization among the Lebanese and their efforts to defend or promote their interests invited and facilitated external intervention. However, if it was necessary to settle the internal dispute in order to decrease the role of external forces, it was also necessary to have their tacit acceptance or to minimize their capabilities to oppose a settlement in order for such a settlement to succeed. In 1989 such conditions were available.

Israel had already lost interest in Lebanon after 1984-85 and was preoccupied with the rising Palestinian intifada which had erupted in December, 1987, in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza strip. As for the Palestinians in Lebanon, the exodus of Palestinians troops from Beirut in August of 1982 dramatically weakened their influence. Later development between 1983 and 1988, battles between Syrian and Palestinian troops in the north, battles between Amal and the Palestinians in Beirut, and various intra-Palestinian fights, contributed further to the weakening of the Palestinians in Lebanon. The remaining Palestinian armed forces were isolated in a few refugee camps of South Lebanon.

In contrast to the Israelis and the Palestinians, Syrian influence in Lebanon increased steadily. Syrian influence in Lebanon had always been considerable, but the military intervention of 1976 gave it a solid material

footing. In the Civil War, Syria initially supported the LNM and their Palestinian allies until the Spring of 1976 when it became evident that the balance of forces was tipping dramatically in the latter's favor. On June 1, 1976, Syrian troops entered Lebanon, upon an invitation by the President and the Lebanese front and supported the Lebanese front in holding back LNM and Palestinian armed forces. In October 1976, two Arab summits held in Cairo and Riyadh endorsed the Syrian intervention. They established an Arab Deterrent Force, the majority of which was composed of Syrians. In 1982, Syrian troops were also forced by the Israelis to evacuate West Beirut along with the Palestinian troops. However, within a few years, Syria was able to regain its influence in Lebanon. In 1987, Syrian troops reentered West Beirut as well as various regions of the Mountain, the Shouf and the southern suburbs of Beirut. In 1990, Syrian troops reentered East Beirut and other predominantly Christian areas that they had been forced out of in 1978.

Part of this re-expansion of Syrian power was with Arab and Western acquiescence. This acquiescence was partly to avoid inter-Arab conflicts and partly to curry Syrian favor in the Persian Gulf and the Arab-Israeli peace process. In 1989, Iraq, free from the pressure of the war with Iran, intervened in support of General Aoun and the Lebanese Forces and against Syria. This could have led to an escalating regional

conflict between Iraq and Syria; therefore, the Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, held a summit meeting in Casablanca and formed a Tripartite Committee composed of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan of Morocco, and President Shadli Ben Jedid of Algeria to deal with the Lebanese crisis.

The Arab initiative in the Lebanese conflict was not only a way to minimize the threat of regional escalation, but was also interpreted by some as an attempt by the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, to counterbalance Syrian influence in Lebanon with a little bit of its own influence.

The U.S. was interested in curtailing the crisis in Lebanon so as not to derail the Arab-Israeli peace process. After the development of the Gulf crisis in 1990, the U.S. had the added concern of containing Iraq and gaining Syrian support for the Gulf war coalition. The end of then Cold War and the break up of the soviet Union strengthened American influence in the region and allowed it to pursue its policy objectives with fewer global obstacles. The U.S. supported the Ta'if negotiations and lent its support both in Arab circles and vis-à-vis Syria toward the successful completion of those talks.

The Ta'if Agreement (officially, the Document of National Accord) was the document that provided the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon. The signing of the Arab League sponsored Ta'if Accord in October 1989 brought a new dawn of peace into Lebanon. It set in motion the process of national reconciliation in Lebanon after more than sixteen years of fierce fighting and bloodshed. The end of war underlined the need to build a state of peace – one that can consolidate the foundations of stability and set the country on a steady course of orderly evolution and progress.

The Ta'if Accord has muzzled the fighting warlords in Lebanon, but it alone cannot ensure a long-term peace. For, the political stability and the rebuilding of its economic base depend on the actors and more so on their actions than a document or constitution. However, the accord's provisions lays stress on external and domestic prerequisites to durable peace. Externally, Lebanon's stability is inextricably linked to the degree of legitimacy and sovereignty respected by external actors. Domestically, socio-political stability is conditioned by a measure of legitimacy the state derives from its people, i.e., the reestablishment of state authority subsuming the sectoral or communal loyalties.

Following the implementation of the Ta'if Accord there has been a tremendous improvement in the Lebanese political situation. Lebanon

embarked on the series of reforms according to the provision of the agreement and signs of long lasting peace had begun to emerge except in the southern Lebanon. But the intermittent fights between Israeli forces and Hizbullah in the South still cast dark shadows of civil war. The “South Lebanon issue” is a part of the age- old Arab Israeli Conflict and can not be resolved without settling the Palestinian question. Under Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, Lebanon started improving economically; currency stabilized, and physical and social reconstruction was kept at the top of the priority.

The Ta’if Accord, undoubtedly, contains many provisions to tackle long standing sources of domestic instability, namely, socio-economic disparities and socio-political discontents. In the socio-economic arena provisions for equitable regional development and administrative decentralization are notable. In the political side, Ta’if accord emphasizes the abolition of political confessionalism as a basic national goal.

Deconfessionalisation is considered as an important step toward relegitimizing Lebanon’s political system. The Ta’if accord calls for the eventual elimination of the confessional system and it refers to the establishment of a national committee that will devise measures to guide the political transition.

However, the process of deconfessionalization is not as simple as it appears from outside, it is encumbered by severe limitations. Deconfessionalization means dis-enfranchisement of the existing establishment, which derives its power from the same confessional constituency. It is doubtful whether the confessional establishment would ever take such a drastic step to disempower those benefiting from it. Moreover, considering Lebanon's current political and social reality, whether an institutional change will produce a functionally deconfessionalised system or not is a question.

With regard to this, socio-political characteristics of Lebanon require a special mention. As primordial ties and politics are very much inter-related in Lebanon, deconfessionalization of the institutions alone do not bring complete democracy to the country. More than five years after signing the Ta'if Agreement, many improvements have been realized. The war has ended, and most Lebanese, except for one part of the southern population, have enjoyed a long forgotten peace since late 1990. State institutions have reestablished their authority, the army is united and gaining strength, and the deterioration in economic conditions has stopped, although a lot has to be done to face a serious financial deficit and economic stagnation. However, the Ta'if Agreement was and is still being implemented within a different balance of internal forces as

well as a different balance of regional, Arab forces, than originally intended. This is reflected through the increase of Syrian influence and a lack of balanced internal representation in Parliament because of the “Christian” decision to boycott the elections held in the summer of 1992. This imbalance has led some of those who participated in and supported the agreement to join the opposition and declare that what is being implemented is not the Ta’if Agreement.

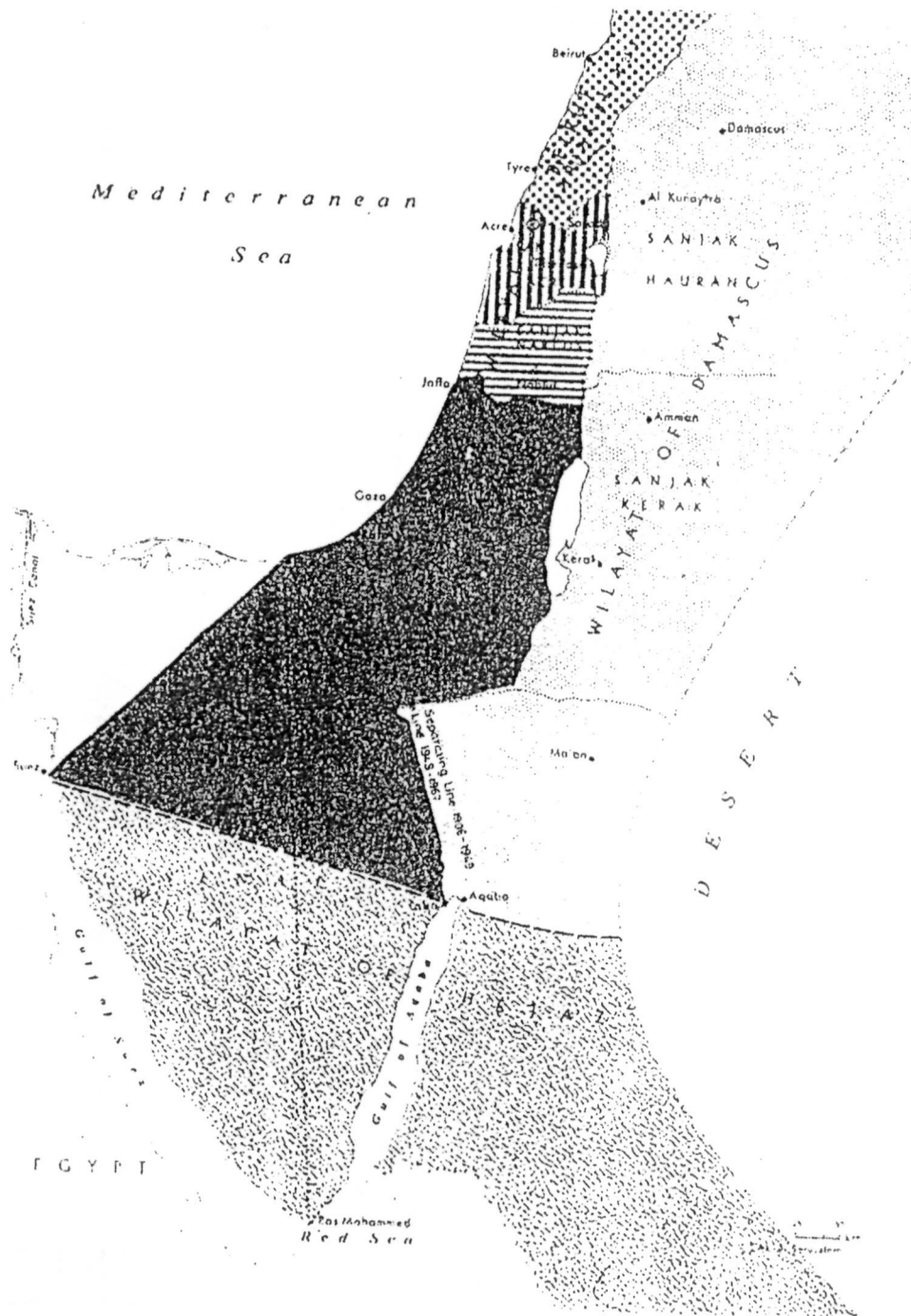
Syria’s unquestionable influence in the Lebanese political affairs imposes constants on its autonomy, with regard to Syria’s influence, it is considered as a mixed blessing. Although it protects Lebanon from the external penetrations there is a significant section in Lebanon, which perceives the Syrian domination with a “conquered” feeling. However, despite the negative domestic fallout that Syria’s presence provokes; its insulating effect has a positive domestic consequence; it allows the Lebanese to focus better on their internal problems.

In the event, Lebanon’s future shaped by external pressures and influences will be largely dependent on the regional peace process. Peace exercise between the major players, Syria, Israel and the Palestinians will have a tremendous effect on the Lebanese political scene.

MAP

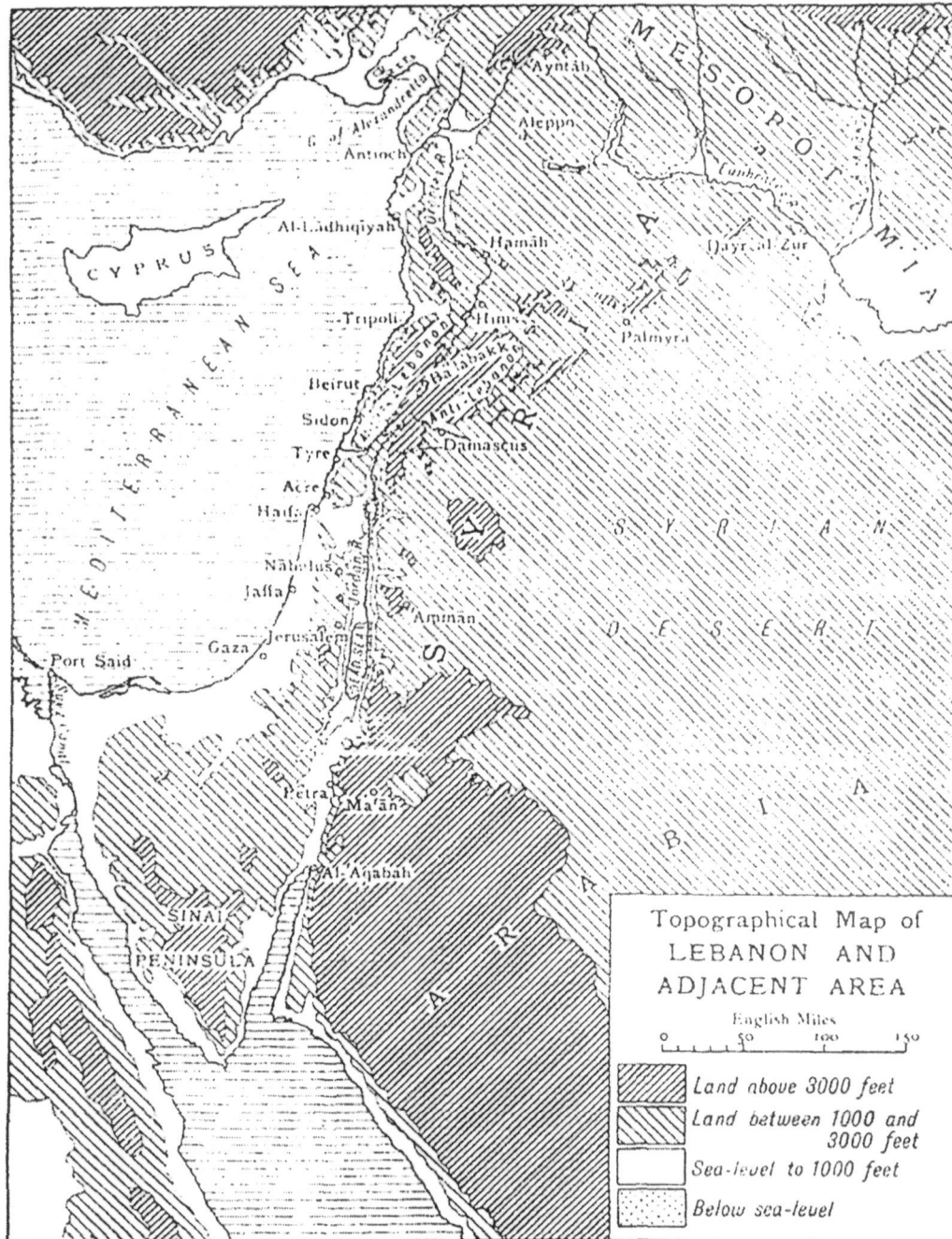
MAP-1

SYRIA UNDER OTTOMAN RULE



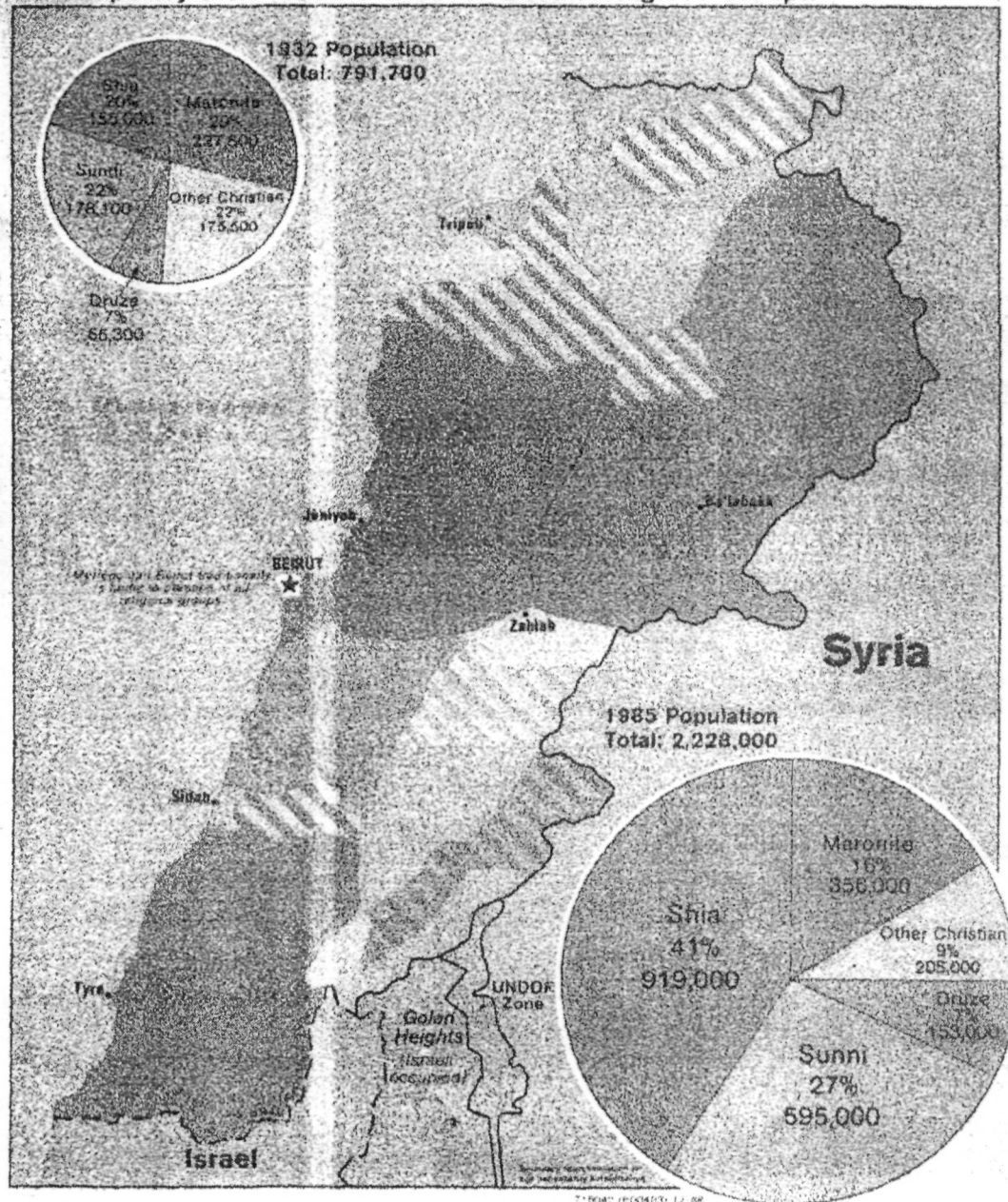
MAP -2

State of Greater Lebanon



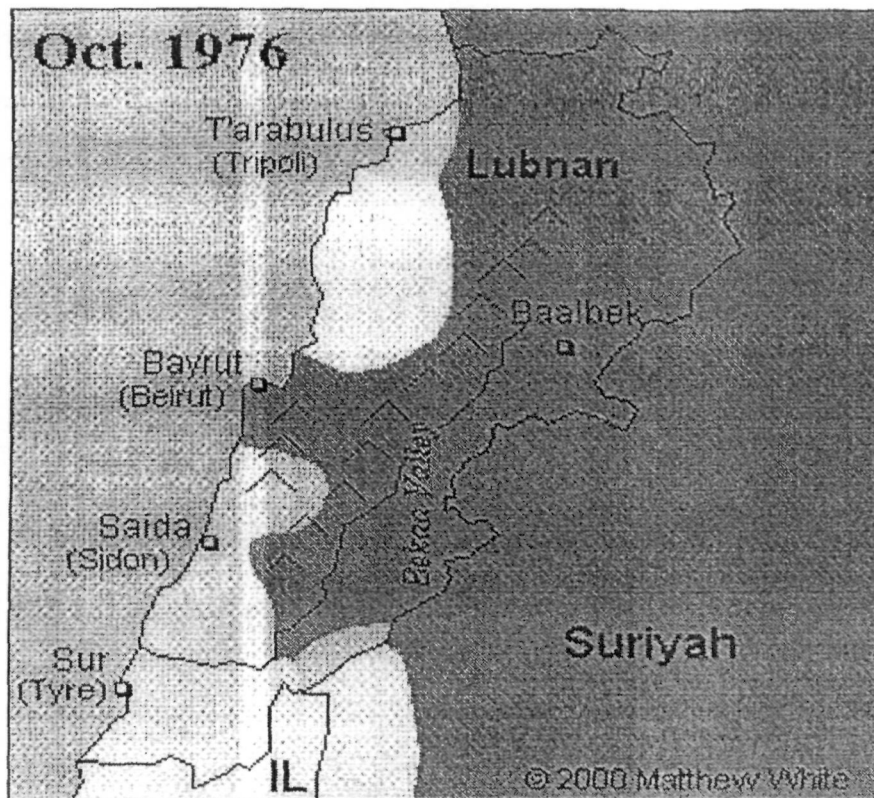
MAP - 3







Contemporary Distribution of Lebanon's Main Religious Groups



MAP - 4

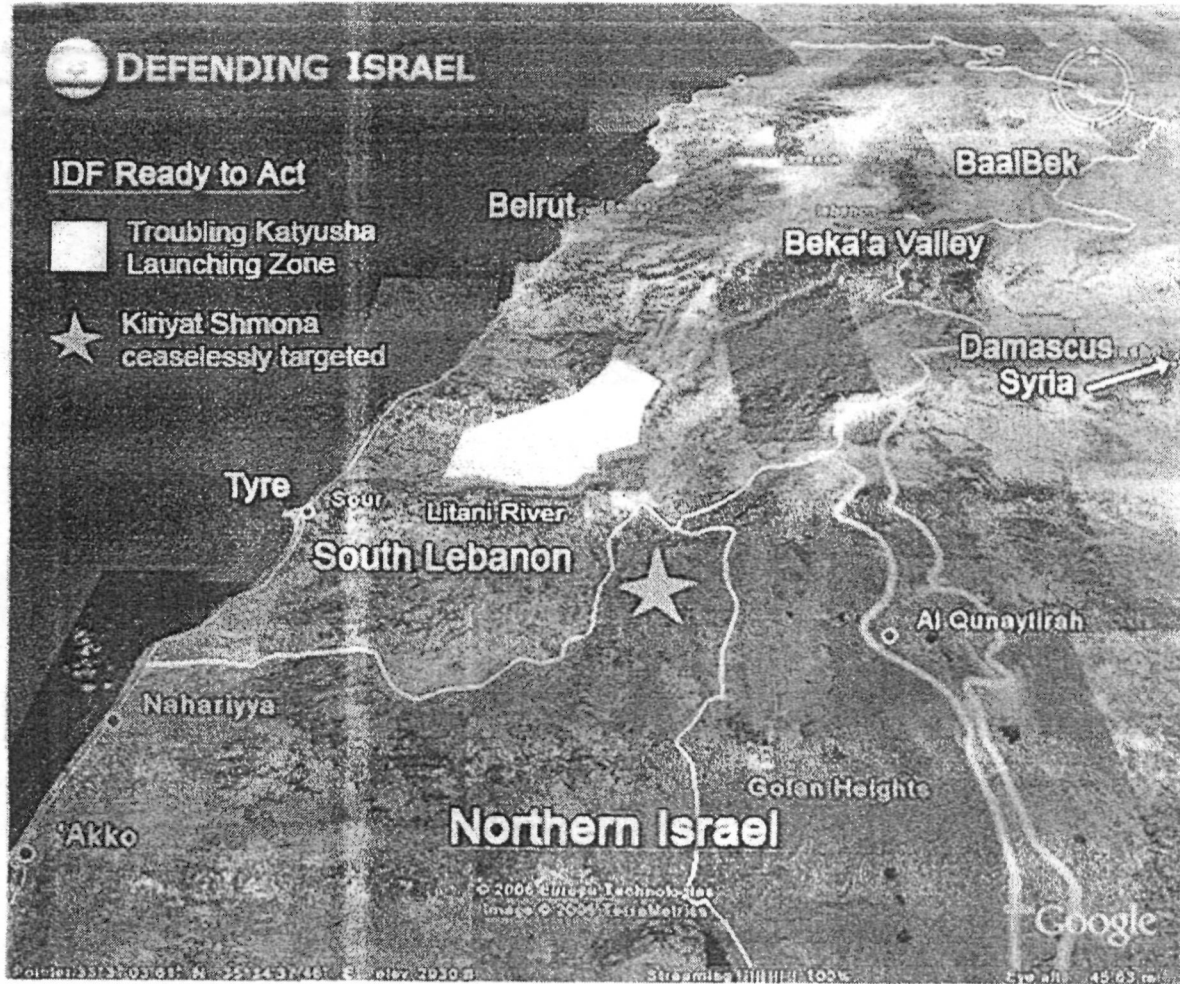
WAR IN LEBANON



Foreign Occupation		Local Militias	
	Syria		Christian
	Israel		Shiite
			Druze
			Moslem (generally)

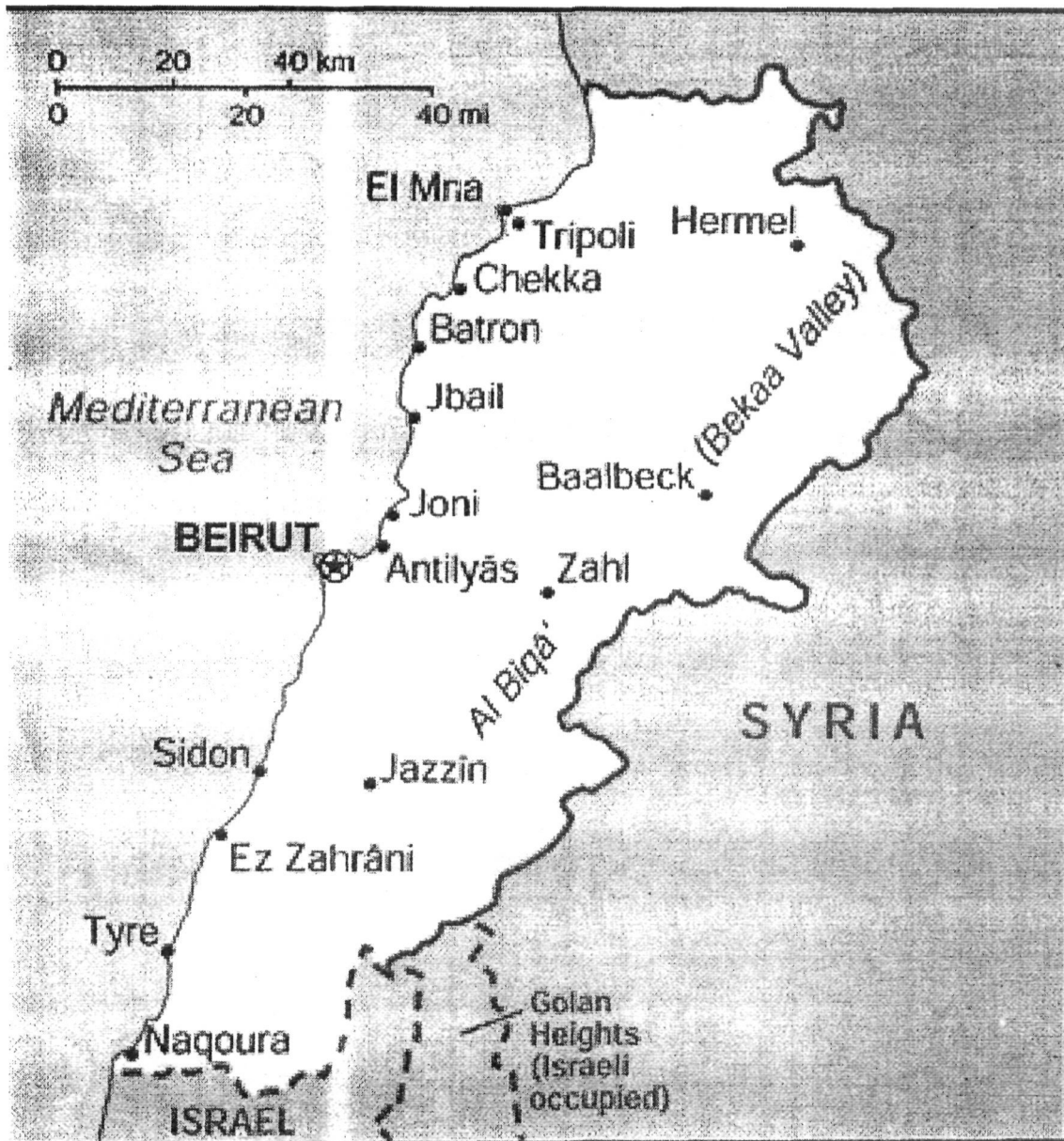
MAP - 5

ISRAEL'S LITANI OPERATION



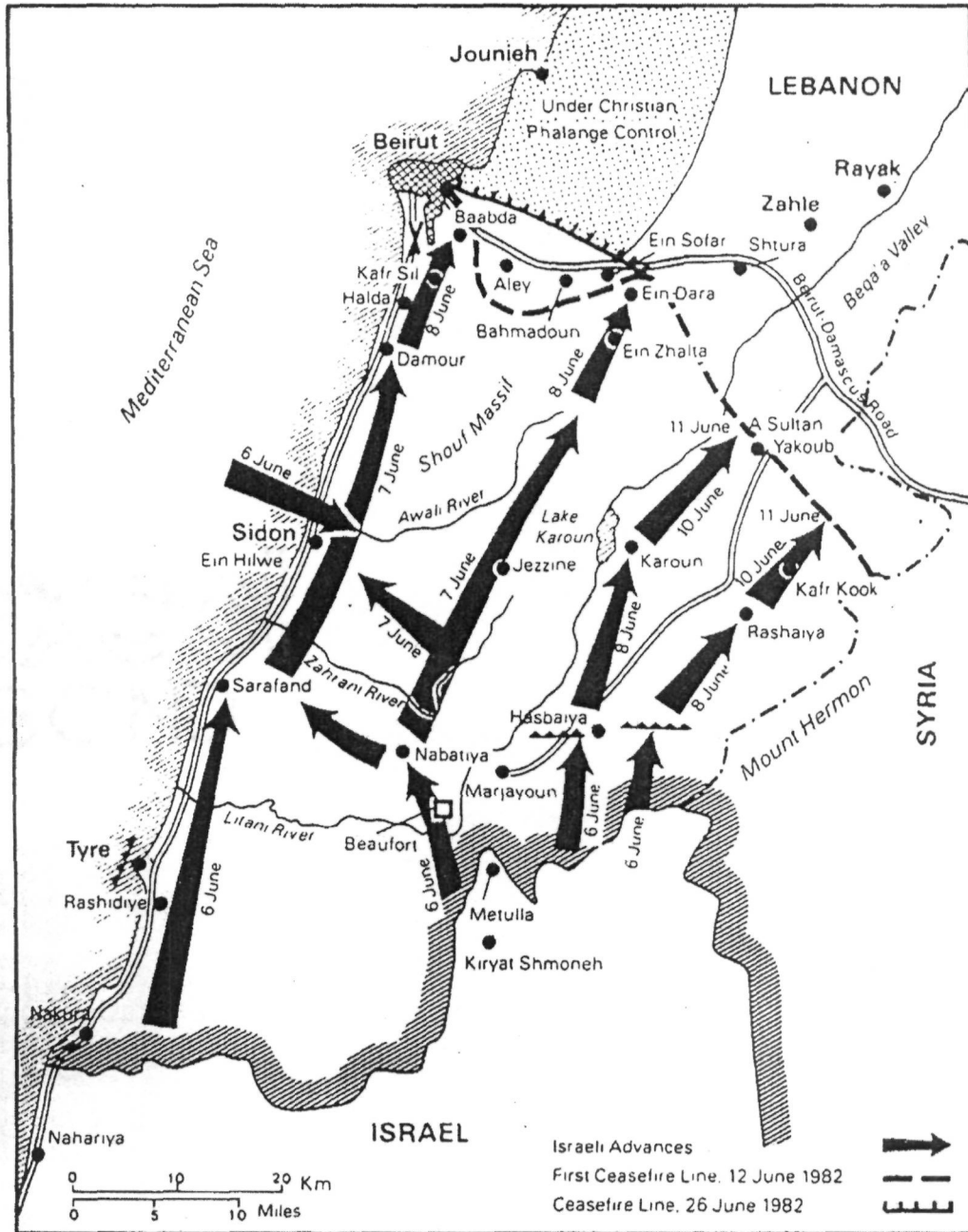
MAP - 6

Syria Siege Zahle



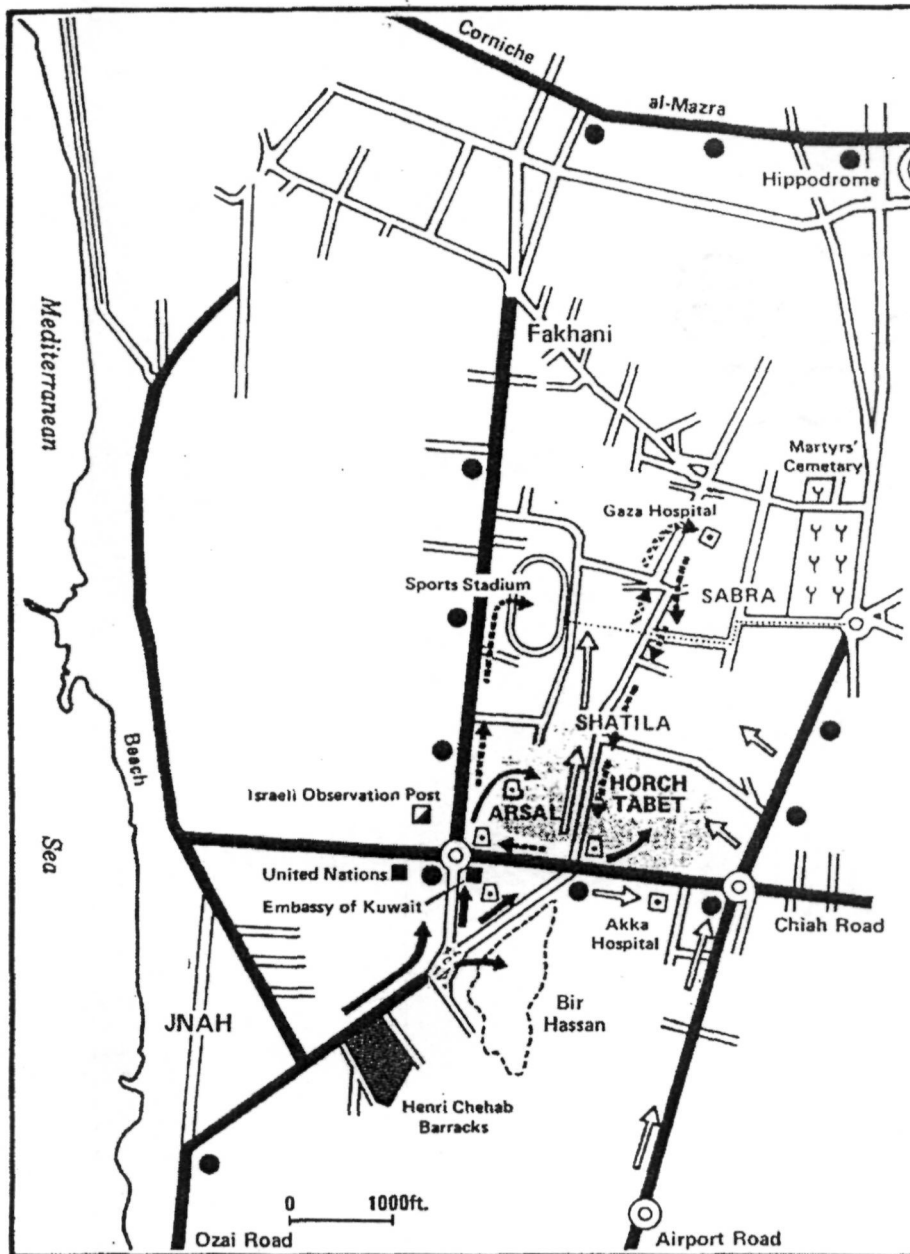
MAP - 7

Israel's Invasion Routes June 1982



MAP - 8

SABRA AND SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP AREAS



Appendix

Appendix - 1

The National Pact

Lebanon Table of Contents

The National Pact (al Mithaq al Watani), an unwritten agreement, came into being in the summer of 1943 as the result of numerous meetings between Khuri (a Maronite), Lebanon's first president, and the first prime minister, Riyad as Solh (also cited as Solh), a Sunni. At the heart of the negotiations was the Christians' fear of being overwhelmed by the Muslim communities in Lebanon and the surrounding Arab countries, and the Muslims' fear of Western hegemony. In return for the Christian promise not to seek foreign, i.e., French, protection and to accept Lebanon's "Arab face," the Muslim side agreed to recognize the independence and legitimacy of the Lebanese state in its 1920 boundaries and to renounce aspirations for union with Syria. The pact also reinforced the sectarian system of government begun under the French Mandate by formalizing the confessional distribution of high-level posts in the government based on the 1932 census' six-to-five ratio favoring Christians over Muslims. Although some historians dispute the point, the terms of the National Pact were believed to have been enunciated by the first cabinet in a statement to the legislature in October 1943. Among the following key points of the agreement are:

- 1 The Maronites to not seek foreign intervention and accept Lebanon as an "Arab" affiliated country, instead of a "Western" one.
- 2 The Muslims (Shi'a and Sunnis) to abandon their aspirations to unite with Syria
- 3 The President of the Republic to always be Maronite.
- 4 The President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) to always be Sunni.
- 5 The President of the National Assembly to always be Shi'a.
- 6 The Deputy speaker of the Parliament has to always be a Greek Orthodox.
- 7 Parliament members to be in a ratio of 6:5 in favour of Christians to Muslims.

As noted, the confessional system outlined in the National Pact was a matter of expediency, an interim measure to overcome philosophical divisions between Christian and Muslim leaders at independence. It was hoped that once the business of governance got under way, and as national spirit grew, the importance of confessionalism in the political structure would diminish. Over the years, the frequent political disputes--the most notable of which were manifested in the 1958' Civil War, the Palestinian controversy of the 1960s and 1970s, and the 1975 Civil War--bear stark testimony to the failure of the National Pact as a means toward societal integration.

Moreover, some observers claim that the National Pact merely perpetuated the power of the privileged. The pact, combined with the system of *zuama* clientelism, guaranteed the maintenance of the status quo and the continuation of privilege for the sectarian elites.

Source: *U.S. Library of Congress*

Appendix -2

U.N. Security Council Resolution 425

March 19, 1978

Following the March 11, 1978 terrorists attack against two Israeli buses near Tel-Aviv, Killing 37 Israelis and injuring 76, the IDI entered southern Lebanon in order to clear out PLO terrorist bases and staging areas south of the Litani River. When Operation Litani began, the US began seeking a suitable formula to send a United Nations peacekeeping force to the area held by Israel, in order to bring about an Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of a buffer zone in southern Lebanon free of terrorists. As a result of these efforts, the UN Security Council met and decided to adopt Resolution 425 calling on Israel to withdraw, and establishing a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Text:

The Security Council,

Taking note of the letters of the Permanent Representative of Lebanon (S/12600 and S/12606) and the Permanent Representative of Israel (S/12607),

Having heard the statements of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Israel,

Gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, the its consequences to the maintenance of international peace,

Convinced that the present situation impedes the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East,

Calls upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;

Decides, in the light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from states Members of the United Nations.

Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of this resolution.

Source: www.israel-mfa.gov.il/MFA/peaceprocess.

Appendix -3

Security Council Resolution on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

Resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978

The Security Council,

Taking note of the letters from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon and from the Permanent Representative of Israel,

Having *heard* the statements of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Israel,

Gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and its consequences to the maintenance of international peace,

Convinced that the present situation impedes the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East,

1. *Calls* for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;
2. *Calls* upon all Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;
3. *Decides* in the light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from Member States;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of the present resolution.

Adopted at the 2074th meeting by 12 votes to none. with 2 abstentions (Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Resolution 509 (1982) of 6 June 1982

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 425 (1978) and 508 (1982),

Gravely concerned at the situation as described by the Secretary-General in his report to the Council,

Reaffirming the need for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries,

1. Demands that Israel withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon;
2. *Demands* that all parties observe strictly the terms of paragraph 1 of resolution 508 (1982) which called on them to cease immediately and simultaneously all military activities within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border;
3. *Calls* on all parties to communicate to the Secretary-General their acceptance of the present resolution within twenty-four hours;
4. *Decide*, to remain seized of the question.

Adopted unanimously the 2375th meeting.

Resolution 512 (1982) of 19 June 1982

The Security Council,

Deeply concerned at the sufferings of the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian populations, *Referring* to the humanitarian principles of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to the obligations arising from the regulations annexed to [he Hague Convention of 1907, *Reaffirming* its resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982),

1. *Calls upon* all the parties to the conflict to respect the rights of the civilian populations, to refrain from all acts of violence against those populations and to take all appropriate measures to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict, in particular, by facilitating the dispatch and distribution of aid provided by United Nations agencies and by non-governmental organizations, in particular, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);

2. *Appeals* to Member States to continue to provide the most extensive humanitarian aid possible;
3. Stresses the particular humanitarian responsibilities of the United Nations and its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), towards civilian populations and calls upon all the parties to the conflict not to hamper the exercise of those responsibilities and to assist in humanitarian efforts;
4. *Takes* note of the measures taken by the Secretary-General to co-ordinate the activities of the international agencies in this field and requests him to make every effort to ensure the implementation of and compliance with this resolution and to report on these efforts to the Council as soon as possible.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2380th meeting

Resolution 516 (1982) of 1 August 1982

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 508 (1982), 509 (1982), 511 (1982), 512 (1982) and 513 (1982),

Recalling its resolution 515 (1982) of 29 July 1982,

Alarmed by the continuation and intensification of military activities in and around Beirut,

Taking note of the latest massive violations of the cease-fire in and around Beirut,

1. *Confirms* its previous resolutions and demands an immediate cease-fire, and a cessation of all military activities within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border;
2. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General to deploy immediately on the request of the Government of Lebanon, United Nations observers to monitor the situation in and around Beirut;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report back to the Council on compliance with this resolution as soon as possible and not later than four hours from now.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2386th
meeting

Resolution 517 (1982) of 4 August 1982

The Security Council,

Deeply shocked and alarmed by the deplorable consequences of the Israeli invasion of Beirut on 3 August 1982,

1. *Reconfirms* its resolutions 508 (1982), 509 (1982), 512 (1982), 513 (1982), 515 (1982) and 516 (1982);
2. *Confirms* once again its demand for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon;
3. Censures Israel for its failure to comply with the above resolutions;
4. *Calls* for the prompt return of Israeli troops which have moved forward subsequent to 1325 hours EDT on 1 August 1982;
5. *Takes* note of the decision of the Palestine Liberation Organization to move the Palestinian armed forces from Beirut;
6. *Expresses* its appreciation for the efforts and steps taken by the Secretary-General to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 516 (1982), and authorizes him, as an immediate step, to increase the number of United Nations observers in and around Beirut;
7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the present resolution as soon as possible and not later than 1000 hours EDT on 5 August 1982;
8. *Decides* to meet at that time if necessary in order to consider the report of the Secretary-General and, in case of failure to comply by any of the parties to the conflict, to consider adopting effective ways and means in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

*Adopted by the Security Council at its 2389th
meeting*

Resolution 518 (1982) of 12 August 1982

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 508 (1982), 509 (1982), 511 (1982), 512 (1982), 513 (1982), 515 (1981), 516 (1982), and 517 (1982),

Expressing its most serious concern about continued military activities in Lebanon and, particularly, in and around Beirut,

1. *Demands* that Israel and all parties to the conflict observe strictly the terms of Security Council resolutions relevant to the immediate cessation of all military activities within Lebanon and particularly, in and around Beirut;
2. Demands the immediate lifting of all restrictions on the city of Beirut in order to permit the free entry of supplies to meet the urgent needs of the civilian population of Beirut;
3. *Requests* United Nations observers in and in the vicinity of Beirut to report on the situation;
4. *Demands* that Israel co-operate fully in the effort to secure the effective deployment of the United Nations observers, as requested by the Government of Lebanon, and in such a manner as to ensure their safety;
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report soonest to the Security Council on the implementation of the present resolution;
6. *Decides* to meet if necessary in order to consider the situation upon receipt of the report of the Secretary-General.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2392nd meeting

Resolution 521 (1982) of 19 September 1982

The Security Council,

Appalled at the massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut, *Having heard* the report of the Secretary-General (S/15400),

Noting that the Government of Lebanon has agreed to the dispatch of United Nations Observers to the sites of greatest human suffering and losses in and around that city,

1. Condemns the criminal massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut;
2. Reaffirm once again its resolutions 512 (1982) and 513 (1982) which call for respect for the rights of the civilian population without any

- discrimination and repudiates all acts of violence against that population;
3. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General as an immediate step to increase the number of United Nations observers in and around Beirut from 10 to 50 and insists that there shall be no interference with the deployment of the observers and that they shall have full freedom of movement;
 4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon, to ensure the rapid deployment of thus observers in order that they may contribute in every way possible within their mandate, to the effort to ensure full protection for the civilian population;
 5. *Requests* the Secretary-General as a matter of urgency to initiate appropriate consultations and in particular consultations with the Government of Lebanon on additional steps which that Council might take, including the possible deployment of United Nations forces, to assist that Government in ensuring full protection for the civilian population in and around Beirut and requests him to report to the Council within forty-eight hours;
 6. Insists that all concerned must permit United Nations observers and forces established by the Security Council in Lebanon to be deployed and to discharge their mandates and in this connection solemnly calls attention to the obligation of all Member States under Article 25 of the Charter to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council in accordance with the Charter;
 7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed on an urgent and continuing basis.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2396th meeting

Resolution 523 (1982) of 18 Oct. 1982

The Security Council,

Having heard the statement of the President of the Lebanese Republic,
Recalling its resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978) and 519 (1982),

Reaffirming its resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), as well as all subsequent resolutions on the situation in Lebanon,

Having studied the report of the Secretary-General (S/15455 and Corr.1), and taking note of its conclusions and recommendations,

Responding to the request of the Government of Lebanon,

1. *Decides* to extend the present mandate of UNIFIL for a further interim period of three months, that is, until 19 January 1983;
2. *Insists* that there shall be no interference under any pretext with the operations of UNIFIL and that the Force shall have full freedom of movement in the discharge of its mandate;
3. *Authorizes* the Force during that period to carry out, with the consent of the Government of Lebanon, interim tasks in the humanitarian and administrative fields, as indicated in resolutions 511 (1982) and 519 (1982), and to assist the Government of Lebanon in assuring the security of all the inhabitants of the area without any discrimination;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, within the three-month period, to consult with the Government of Lebanon and to report to the Council on ways and means of ensuring the full implementation of the UNIFIL mandate as defined in resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), and the relevant decisions of the Security Council;
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of his consultations.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2400th meeting

Resolution 529 (1983) of 18 January 1983

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), and all subsequent resolutions on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon,

Recalling further its resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982),

Having taken note of the letter of the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General of 13 January 1983 (s/15557, annex), and of the statement he made at the meeting of the Council, *Having studied* the report of the Secretary-General

(S/15557) and taken note of his observations,

Responding to the request of the Government of Lebanon,

1. *Decides* to extend the present mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for a further interim period of six months, that is, until 19 July 1983;
2. *Calls upon* all parties concerned to co-operate with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for the full implementation of this resolution;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the progress made in this respect.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2411th meeting

Resolution 538 (1983) of 18 October 1983

The Security Council,

Having *heard* the statement of the representative of Lebanon,

Recalling its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and all subsequent resolutions on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon,

Recalling further its resolutions 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and 520 (1982). as well as all its other resolutions on the situation in Lebanon,

Reiterating its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries,

Having studied the report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/160.36) and taking note of the conclusions and recommendations expressed therein,

Taking *note* of the letter of the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (S/16036, para. 20),

Responding to the request of the Government of Lebanon,

1. *Decides* to extend the present mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for a further interim period of six months, that is, until 19 April 1984;

2. *Call upon* all parties concerned to fully cooperate with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for the full implementation of its mandate (as defined in resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and the relevant decisions of the Security Council);
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the progress made in this respect.

*Adopted by the Security Council at its
2480th meeting.*

Source: [http://www.unitednations/securitycouncilresolutiononinterimforceinlebanon\(UNIFIL\)](http://www.unitednations/securitycouncilresolutiononinterimforceinlebanon(UNIFIL))

Appendix -4

Resolution 521 (1982)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2396th meeting held on 19 September 1982

The security Council,

Appalled at the massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut, Having heard the report of the Secretary-General (S/15400), Noting that the Government of Lebanon has agreed to the dispatch of United Nations Observers to the sites of greatest human suffering and losses in and around that city,

1. Condemns the criminal massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut;
2. Reaffirms once again its resolutions 512 (1982) and 513 (1982) which call for respect for the right of the civilian population without any discrimination and repudiates all acts of violence against that population;
3. Authorizes the Secretary-General as a immediate step to increase the number of United Nations observers in and around Beirut from 10 to 50 and insists that there shall be no interference with the deployment of the observers and that they shall have full freedom of movement;
4. requests the secretary-general, in consultation with the government of Lebanon, to ensure the rapid deployment of those observers in order that they may contribute in every way possible within their mandate, to the effort to ensure full protection for the civilian population;
5. requests the secretary-General as a matter of urgency to initiate appropriate consultations and in particular consultations with the government of Lebanon on additional steps which the council might take, including the possible protection for the civilian population in and around Beirut and requests him to report to the council within forty-eight hours;
6. Insists that all concerned must permit United Nations observers and forces established by the Security Council in Lebanon to be deployed and to discharge their mandates and in this connexion solemnly calls

attention to the obligation on all Member states under Article 25 of the Charter to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council in accordance with the Charter;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the council informed on an urgent and continuing basis.

Source: <http://www.lebanese-forces/lebanon/unresolutions/un521/html>.

Appendix -5

Israel-Lebanon: Agreement on Withdrawal of Troops from Lebanon, Done at Kiryat Shemona and Khaldeh, May 17, 1983

AGREEMENT BETWEEN

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

The Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Republic of Lebanon:

Bearing in mind the importance *of* maintaining and strengthening international peace based on freedom, equality, justice, and respect for fundamental human rights;

Reaffirming their faith in the aims and principles of the Charter *of* the United Nations and recognizing their right and obligation to live in peace with each other as well as with all states, within secure and recognized boundaries;

Having agreed to declare the termination of the state of war between them;

Desiring to ensure lasting security for both their States and to Ivoid threats and the use of force between them;

Desiring to establish their mutual relations in the manner provided for in this Agreement;

Having delegated their undersigned represefltative plenipotentiaries, provided with full powers, in order to sign in the presence of the representative *of* the United States of America, this Agreement;

Have agreed to the following provisions:

Article 1

1. The Parties agree and undertake to respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of each other. They consider the existing international boundary between Israel and Lebanon inviolable.

2. The Parties confirm that the state of war between Israel and Lebanon has been terminated and no longer exists.
3. Taking into account the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2, Israel undertakes to withdraw all its armed forces from Lebanon in accordance with the Annex of the present Agreement.

Article 2

The Parties being guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, undertake to settle their disputes by peaceful means in such a manner as to promote international peace and security and justice.

Article 3

In order to provide maximum security for Israel and Lebanon, the Parties agree to establish and implement security arrangements, including the creation of a Security Region, as provided for in the Annex of the present Agreement.

Article 4

1. The territory of each Party will not be used as a base for hostile or terrorist activity against the other Party, its territory, or its people.
2. Each Party will prevent the existence or organization of irregular forces, armed bands, organizations, bases, offices or infrastructure, the aims and purposes of which include incursions or any act of terrorism into the territory of the other Party, or any other activity aimed at threatening or endangering the security of the other Party and safety of its people. To this end all agreements and arrangements enabling the presence and functioning on the territory of either Party of elements hostile to the other Party are null and void.
3. Without prejudice to the inherent right of self-defense in accordance with international law, each Party will refrain:
 - a. from organizing, instigating, assisting, or participating in threats or acts of belligerency, subversion, or incitement or any aggression directed against the other Party, its population or property, both within its territory and originating therefrom, or in the territory of the other Party.

- b. from using the territory of the other Party for conducting a military attack against the territory of a third state.
- c. from intervening in the internal or external affairs of the other Party.

4. Each Party undertakes to ensure that preventive; location and due proceedings will be taken against persons or organizations perpetrating acts in violation of this Article.

Article 5

Consistent with the termination of the state of war and within the framework of their constitutional provisions, the Parties will abstain from any form of hostile propaganda against each other.

Article 6

Each Party will prevent entry into, deployment in, or passage through its territory, its air space and, subject to the right of innocent passage in accordance with international law! its territorial sea, by military forces, armament, or military equipment of any state hostile to the other Party.

Article 7

Except as provided in the present Agreement, nothing will preclude the deployment on Lebanese territory of international forces requested and accepted by the Government of Lebanon to assist in maintaining its authority. New contributors to such forces shall be selected from among states having diplomatic relations with both Parties to the present Agreement.

Article 8

1. a. Upon entry into force of the present Agreement, a Joint Liaison Committee will be established by the Parties, in which the United States of America will be a participant, and will commence its functions. This Committee will be entrusted with the supervision of the implementation of all areas covered by the present Agreement. In matters involving security arrangements, it will deal with unresolved problems referred to it by the Security Arrangements Committee established in subparagraph c. below. Decisions of this Committee will be taken unanimously.

- b. The Joint Liaison Committee will address itself on a continuing basis to the development of mutual relations between Israel and Lebanon, *inter alia* the regulation of the movement of goods, products and persons, communications, etc.
 - c. Within the framework of the Joint Liaison Committee, there will be a Security Arrangements Committee whose composition and functions are defined in the Annex of the present Agreement.
 - d. Subcommittees of the Joint Liaison Committee may be established as the need arises
 - e. The Joint Liaison Committee will meet in Israel and Lebanon, alternately.
 - f. Each Party, *if* it so desires and unless there is an agreed change of status, may maintain a liaison office on the territory of the other Party in order to carry out the above-mentioned functions within the framework of the Joint Liaison Committee and to assist in the implementation of the present Agreement.
 - g. The members of the Joint Liaison Committee from each of the Parties will be headed by a senior government official.
 - h. All other matters relating to these liaison offices, their personnel, and the personnel of each Party present in the territory of the other Party in connection with the implementation of the present Agreement will be the subject of a protocol to be concluded between the Parties in the Joint Liaison Committee. Pending the conclusion of this protocol, the liaison offices and the above-mentioned personnel will be treated in accordance with the pertinent provisions of the Convention on Special Missions of December 8, 1969, including those provisions concerning privileges and immunities. The foregoing is without prejudice to the positions of the Parties concerning that Convention.
2. During the six-month period after the withdrawal of all Israeli armed forces from Lebanon in accordance with Article 1 of the present Agreement and the simultaneous restoration of Lebanese governmental authority along the international boundary between Israel and Lebanon, and in the light of the termination of the state of war, the Parties shall

initiate, within the Joint Liaison Committee, *bona fide* negotiations in order to conclude agreements on the movement of goods, products and persons and their implementation on a non-discriminatory basis.

Article 9

1. Each of the two Parties will take, within a time limit of one year as of entry into force of the present Agreement, all measures necessary for the abrogation of treaties, laws and regulations deemed in conflict with the present Agreement, subject to and in conformity with its constitutional procedures.
2. The Parties undertake not to apply existing obligations, enter into any obligations, or adopt laws or regulations in conflict with the present Agreement.

Article 10

1. The present Agreement shall be ratified by both Parties in conformity with their respective constitutional procedures. It shall enter into force on the exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall supersede the previous agreements between Israel and Lebanon.
2. The Annex, the Appendix and the Map attached thereto, and the Agreed Minutes to the present Agreement shall be considered integral parts thereof.
3. The present Agreement may be modified, amended, or superseded by mutual agreement of the Parties.

Article 11

1. Disputes between the Parties arising out of the interpretation or application of the present Agreement will be settled by negotiation in the Joint Liaison Committee. Any dispute of this character not so resolved shall be submitted to conciliation and, if unresolved, thereafter to an agreed procedure for a definitive resolution.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1, disputes arising out of the interpretation or application of the Annex shall be resolved in the framework of the Security Arrangements Committee and, if unresolved, shall thereafter, at the request of either Party, be referred to the Joint Liaison Committee for resolution through negotiation.

Article 12

The present Agreement shall be communicated to the Secretariat of the United Nations for registration in conformity with the provision;; of Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Done at Kiryat Shemona and Khaldeh this seventeenth day of May, 1983, in triplicate in four authentic texts In the Hebrew, Arabic, English and French languages. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English and French texts will be equally authoritative.

Source: *Report of the Department of Defense (Long) commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983, issued on December 20, 1983.*

Appendix – 6

THE TAIF ACCORDS OCTOBER 22 1989

Excerpts

PART II: IMPOSING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OVER ALL LEBANESE LAND

Given the agreement among the Lebanese parties on the existence of a strong and able state based on national reconciliation the national accord government shall outline a detailed security plan for a one-year period whose aim shall be: the gradual extension of the sovereignty of the Lebanese government over all Lebanese lands through the State's intrinsic resources. The general elements of the plan are as follows:

1. Declaration of the disbanding of the Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and the transfer of weapons in their possession to the Lebanese government within six months of the rectification of the document of national reconciliation the election of a president the establishment of a national accord government and the constitutional ratification of the political reforms.
2. The strengthening of the internal security forces through the following measures:
 - a. The opening of recruitment to all people of Lebanon without exception the training of recruits and their dispersal among the district units. Concurrently they will undergo regular and organized courses.
 - b. The strengthening of the security apparatus in order to control border entries and exits by air sea and land.
3. The strengthening of the armed forces
 - a. The major task of the armed forces is to defend the motherland and when necessary to maintain public order when threatened when the internal security forces are unable to handle the situation alone.
 - b. The armed forces shall be used to help the internal security forces in maintaining security in circumstances to be decided by the government.

- c. The armed forces shall be united trained and drilled to enable them to bear national responsibility against Israeli aggression.
 - d. When the internal security forces shall be fit to carry out their security missions the armed forces shall be returned to their bases.
 - e. The intelligence system of the armed forces shall be reorganized for sole military purposes.
4. The solution of the problem of Lebanese displaced persons every Lebanese national who has left his home since 1975 shall have the right to return to his point of departure. Laws will be passed to ensure this right and means of rehabilitation will be provided.

Given the aim of the Lebanese government to impose its control over all of Lebanese land through its own resources first and foremost by means of the internal security forces and on the basis of the ties of legitimate Lebanese forces in extending the sovereignty of the Lebanese government during a period of time not exceeding two years after the ratification to the national reconciliation document the establishment of the national accord government and the constitutional ratification of the political reforms. At the conclusion of this period the two governments - the Syrian government and the Lebanese national accord government - shall decide on the redeployment of the Syrian forces in the Bekaa area and the western Bekaa approaches in Dahr al-Baydar to the Khamana-al-Mudayraj-Ein Dara line. Should the need arise (for the forces to be deployed) in other locations this shall be decided by a joint Lebanese-Syrian military committee with the agreement of the two governments to determine the scope of the Syrian forces and the duration of their presence in these areas. The agreement shall also define the relationship between these forces and the Lebanese authorities in the places they are stationed.

The Arab League "troika" committee is prepared to assist the two states in achieving this agreement should they so wish.

PART III: THE LIBERATION OF LEBANON FROM ISRAELI OCCUPATION

1. Renewed state control to the internationally recognized Lebanese border requires the following measures:

- a. The implementation of Resolution 425 and the other Security Council decisions referring to the complete removal of the Israeli occupation.
- b. Adherence to the armistice agreement signed on March 23 1949.
- c. Taking all necessary measures to liberate all Lebanese lands from Israeli occupation the extension of government sovereignty to all these lands the deployment of the Lebanese army along the border with Israel and the strengthening of the UNIFIL presence in southern Lebanon in order to ensure the Israeli withdrawal and to restore security and stability to the border area.

PART IV: LEBANESE-SYRIAN RELATIONS

Lebanon which has Arab affinities and an Arab identity maintains loyal ties of brotherhood with all Arab states. It maintains preferred relations with Syria based on the roots of close affinity history and common interests.

This is the bases for coordination and cooperation between the two states which shall sign agreements in various areas in such a manner as to realize the interests of both states within the framework of the sovereignty and independence of each.

On this basis and given that the security principles create the necessary climate for the development of these preferred relations Lebanon cannot serve as the source of a threat against Syrian security nor can Syria serve as the source of a threat against Lebanese security. Hence Lebanon shall not allow itself to serve as the transit point or base for any force state or organization interested in harming its own security or the security of Syria.

Similarly Syria which meticulously upholds the security independence and unity of Lebanon and the agreement between the two countries shall not allow any activity that threatens (Lebanese) security independence or sovereignty.

Adopted on: 23 May 1926. }

{ ICL Document Status: 21 Sep 1990. }

The ICL edition is based on the raw text of an annotated translation by Paul E. Salem for the Lebanese Center of Political Studies (cf. The Beirut Review No. 1/1991) consolidating all changes up to and including the Amendments of 21 Aug 1990 (signed into force 21 Sep 1990). That text is itself based on 'The Lebanese Constitution: A Reference Edition in English Translation' by the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut (1960), and also seems to draw on the 1973 translation by Gabriel M. Bustros for the Bureau of Lebanese and Arab Documentation in London. We have added minor corrections, changed the British-style 'shall' predominance to more definite wording, worked in the ICL formatting, and included article headings and paragraph numbers. ICL keys are yet to be done. }

Preamble

- a. Lebanon is a sovereign, free, and independent country. It is a final homeland for all its citizens. It is unified in its territory, people, and institutions within the boundaries defined in this constitution and recognized internationally.
- b. Lebanon is Arab in its identity and in its association. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception.
- c. Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination.
- d. The people are the source of authority and sovereignty; they shall exercise these powers through the constitutional institutions.
- e. The political system is established on the principle of separation, balance, and cooperation amongst the various branches of Government.

- f. The economic system is free and ensures private initiative and the right to private property.
- g. The even development among regions on the educational, social, and economic levels shall be a basic pillar of the unity of the state and the stability of the system.
- h. The abolition of political confessionalism is a basic national goal and shall be achieved according to a gradual plan.
- i. Lebanese territory is one for all Lebanese. Every Lebanese has the right to live in any part of it and to enjoy the sovereignty of law wherever he resides. There is no segregation of the people on the basis of any type of belonging, and no fragmentation, partition, or colonization.
- j. There is no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the 'pact of communal coexistence'. This Constitutional Law shall be published in the Official Gazette.

[Part] A. Fundamental Provisions

[Chapter] I. On the State and its Territories

Article 1 [Territory]

Lebanon is an independent, indivisible, and sovereign state. Its frontiers are those which now bound it:

On the North: From the mouth of al-Kabir River, along a line following the course of this river to its point of junction with Khalid Valley opposite al-Qamar Bridge.

On the East: The summit line separating the Khalid Valley and al-Asi River (Orontes) and passing by the villages of Mu'aysarah, Harbanah, Hayt, Ibish, Faysan to the height of the two villages of Brina and Matraba. This line follows the northern boundary of the Ba'albak District at the northeastern and south eastern directions, thence the eastern boundaries of the districts of Ba'albak, Biqa', Hasbayya, and Rashayya.

On the South: The present southern boundaries of the districts of Sûr (Tyre) and Marji`yun.

On the West: The Mediterranean.

Article 2 [Territorial Integrity]

No part of the Lebanese territory may be alienated or ceded.

Article 3 [Administrative Areas]

The boundaries of the administrative areas may not be modified except by law.

Article 4 [Republic, Capital]

Greater Lebanon is a Republic the capital of which is Beirut.

Article 5 [Flag]

The Lebanese flag is composed of three horizontal stripes, a white stripe between two red ones. The width of the white stripe is equal to that of both red stripes. In the center of and occupying one third of the white stripe is a green Cedar tree with its top touching the upper red stripe and its base touching the lower red stripe.

[Chapter] II. The Rights and Duties of the Citizen

Article 6 [Nationality]

Lebanese nationality and the manner in which it is acquired, retained, and lost is to be determined in accordance with the law.

Article 7 [Equality]

All Lebanese are equal before the law. They equally enjoy civil and political rights and equally are bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction.

Article 8 [Personal Liberty, *nulla poena sine lege*]

Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected by law. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, or kept in custody except according to the provisions of the law. No offense may be established or penalty imposed except by law.

Article 9 [Conscience, Belief]

There shall be absolute freedom of conscience. The state in rendering homage to the Most High shall respect all religions and creeds and guarantees, under its protection, the free exercise of all religious rites provided that public order is not disturbed. It also guarantees that the personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, is respected.

Article 10 [Education, Confessional Schools]

Education is free insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not interfere with the dignity of any of the religions or creeds. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools provided they follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction.

Article 11 [Official National Language]

Arabic is the official national language. A law determines the cases in which the French language may be used.

Article 12 [Public Office]

Every Lebanese has the right to hold public office, no preference being made except on the basis of merit and competence, according to the conditions established by law. A special statute guarantees the rights of state officials in the departments to which they belong.

Article 13 [Expression, Press, Assembly, Association]

The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law.

Article 14 [Home]

The citizen's place of residence is inviolable. No one may enter it except in the circumstances and manners prescribed by law.

Article 15 [Property]

Rights of ownership are protected by law. No one's property may be expropriated except for reasons of public utility in cases established by law and after fair compensation has been paid beforehand.

[Part] B. Powers

[Chapter] I. General Provisions

Article 16 [Legislative Power, One Chamber]

Legislative power is vested in a single body, the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 17 [Executive Power, Council of Ministers]

Executive power is entrusted to the Council of Ministers to be exercised it in accordance with the conditions laid down in this constitution.

Article 18 [Bills]

The Parliament and the Council of Ministers have the right to propose laws. No law shall be promulgated until it has been adopted by the Chamber.

Article 19 [Constitutional Council]

A Constitutional Council is established to supervise the constitutionality of laws and to arbitrate conflicts that arise from parliamentary and presidential elections. The President, the President of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, along with any ten Members of Parliament, have the right to consult this Council on matters that relate to the constitutionality of laws. The officially recognized heads of religious communities have the right to consult this Council only on laws relating to personal status, the freedom of belief and religious practice, and the freedom of religious education. The rules governing the organization, operation, composition, and modes of appeal of the Council are decided by a special law.

Article 20 [Judicial Power]

Judicial power is to be exercised by the tribunals of various levels and jurisdictions. It functions within the limits of an order established by the law and offering the necessary guarantees to judges and litigants. The limits and conditions for the protection of the judges are determined by law. The judges are independent in the exercise of their duties. The decisions and judgments of all courts are rendered and executed in the name of the Lebanese People.

Article 21 [Electoral Rights]

Every Lebanese citizen who has completed his twenty-first year is an elector provided he fulfills the conditions laid down in the electoral law.

[Chapter] II. The Legislative Power

Article 22 [Senate]

With the election of the first Parliament on a national, non-confessional basis, a Senate is established in which all the religious communities are represented. Its authority is limited to major national issues.

Article 23 [Eligibility to the Senate]

{abolished 1927}

Article 24 [Electoral Laws]

(1) The Chamber of Deputies is composed of elected members; their number and the method of their election is determined by the electoral laws in effect. Until such time as the Chamber enacts new electoral laws on a non-confessional basis, the distribution of seats is according to the following principles:

- a. Equal representation between Christians and Muslims.
- b. Proportional representation among the confessional groups within each religious community.
- c. Proportional representation among geographic regions.

(2) Exceptionally, and for one time only, the seats that are currently vacant, as well as the new seats that have been established by law, are to be filled by appointment, all at once, and by a majority of two thirds of the Government of National Unity. This is to establish equality between Christians and Muslims as stipulated in the Document of National Accord [The Taif Agreement]. The electoral laws will specify the details regarding the implementation of this clause.

Article 25 [Dissolution]

Should the Chamber of Deputies be dissolved, the Decision of dissolution must provide for the holding of new elections in accordance with Article 24 and within a period not exceeding three months.

Article 26 [Location of Government and Parliament]

The Government and the Chamber of Deputies shall be located in Beirut.

Article 27 [Representation]

A member of the Chamber represents the whole nation. No restriction or stipulation may be imposed upon his mandate by his electors.

Article 28 [No Incompatibility]

A Deputy may also occupy a ministerial position. Ministers, all or in part, may be selected from among the members of the Chamber or from persons outside the Chamber.

Article 29 [Incompatibility by Law]

Cases in which persons are disqualified from becoming Deputies are determined by law.

Article 30 [Validating Elections]

The Deputies alone have competence to judge the validity of their mandate. No Deputy's mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two thirds of the votes of the entire membership. This clause is automatically cancelled as soon as the Constitutional Council is established and as soon as the laws relating to it are implemented.

Article 31 [Illegal Sessions]

Meetings of the Chamber outside those set for legal sessions are unlawful and *ipso facto* null and void.

Article 32 [Ordinary Sessions]

The Chamber meets each year in two ordinary sessions. The first session opens on the first Tuesday following 15 March and continues until the end of May. The second session begins on the first Tuesday following 15 Oct; its meetings is reserved for the discussion of and voting on the budget before any other work. This session lasts until the end of the year.

Article 33 [Extraordinary Sessions]

The ordinary sessions begin and end automatically on the dates fixed in Article 32. The President of the Republic in consultation with the Prime Minister may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions by a Decree specifying the dates of the opening and closing of the extraordinary sessions as

well as the agenda. The President of the Republic is required to convoke the Chamber if an absolute majority of the total membership so requests.

Article 34 [Quorum]

The Chamber is not validly constituted unless the majority of the total membership is present. Decisions are to be taken by a majority vote. Should the votes be equal, the question under consideration is deemed rejected.

Article 35 [Publicity]

The meetings of the Chamber are public. However, at the request of the Government or of five Deputies, the Chamber may sit in secret sessions. It may then decide whether to resume the discussion of the same question in public.

Article 36 [Voting Process]

Votes are to be cast verbally or by the members standing, except for elections when the ballot is secret. With respect to laws in general and on questions of confidence, the vote is always taken by roll call and the responses are made in an audible voice.

Article 37 [Vote of No-Confidence]

Every Deputy has the absolute right to raise the question of no-confidence in the government during ordinary or extraordinary sessions. Discussion of and voting on such a proposal may not take place until at least five days after submission to the secretariat of the Chamber and its communication to the ministers concerned.

Article 38 [Reintroduction of Bills]

No Bill that has been rejected by the Chamber may be re-introduced during the same session.

Article 39 [Indemnity]

No member of the Chamber may be prosecuted because of ideas and opinions expressed during the period of his mandate.

Article 40 [Immunity]

No member of the Chamber may, during the sessions, be prosecuted or arrested for a criminal offense without the permission of the Chamber, except when he is caught in the act.

Article 41 [Re-election]

Should a seat in the Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor begins within two months. The mandate of the new member does not exceed that of the old member whose place he is taking; however, should the seat in the Chamber become vacant during the last six months of its mandate, no successor may be elected.

Article 42 [General Elections]

General elections for the renewal of the Chamber shall take place within a sixty day period proceeding the expiration of its mandate.

Article 43 [Rules of Procedure]

The Chamber draws up its own internal rules and procedures.

Article 44 [First Session]

(1) Each time a new Chamber is elected, the Chamber meets under the presidency of the oldest member and the secretariat or the two youngest. It will then elect separately, by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast, the President and the Vice President of the Chamber to hold office for the length or the Chamber's term. At the third ballot, a relative majority is sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate is considered elected.

(2) Every time a new Chamber or Deputies is elected, as well as in the October session or each year, the Chamber elects two Secretaries by secret ballot according to the majority stipulated in the first part of this article.

(3) The Chamber may, once only, two years after the election of its President and his Deputy, and in the first session it holds, withdraw its confidence from the President of the Chamber or his Deputy by a Decision of two thirds of the Chamber, based on a petition signed by at least ten Deputies. The Chamber, at such point, must hold an immediate session to fill the vacant post.

Article 45 [Presence]

Members of the Chamber may only vote when they are present at the meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

Article 46 [Parliamentary Order]

The Chamber has the exclusive right to maintain order in its meetings through its President.

Article 47 [Petitions]

Petitions to the Chamber may not be presented except in writing. They may not be presented verbally or at the bar of the Chamber.

Article 48 [Remuneration]

The remuneration of members of the Chamber is determined by law.

[Chapter] III. The Executive Power

[Section] 1. The President of the Republic

Article 49 [Presidential Powers]

(1) The President of the Republic is the head of the state and the symbol of the nation's unity. He shall safeguard the constitution and Lebanon's independence, unity, and territorial integrity. The President shall preside over the Supreme Defense Council and be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

(2) The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. After a first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. The President's term is for six years. He may not be re-elected until six years after the expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

(3) It is also not possible to elect judges, Grade One civil servants, or their equivalents in all public institutions to the Presidency during their term or office or within two years following the date of their resignation or their leaving office for whatever reason.

Article 50 [Oath]

Upon assuming office, the President of the Republic shall take an oath of fidelity before the Parliament to the Lebanese Nation and the constitution in the following terms:

"I swear by Almighty God to observe the Constitution and the laws of the

Lebanese Nation and to maintain the independence of Lebanon and its territorial integrity."

Article 51 [Promulgation of Laws]

The President of the Republic promulgates the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber in accordance with the time limits specified by the constitution. He asks for the publication of these laws, and he may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions.

Article 52 [Negotiation of International Treaties]

The President of the Republic negotiates international treaties in coordination with the Prime Minister. These treaties are not considered ratified except after agreement of the Council of Ministers. They are to be made known to the Chamber whenever the national interest and security of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties that cannot be renounced every year are not considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 53 [List of Additional Presidential Powers]

1. The President presides over the Council of Ministers when he wishes without participating in voting.

2. The President designates the Prime Minister in consultation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies based on parliamentary consultations which are binding and the content of which the President formally discloses to the Prime Minister.

3. The President alone issues the Decree which designates the Prime Minister.

4. He issues, in agreement with the Prime Minister, the decree appointing the Cabinet and the decrees accepting the resignation of Ministers.

5. He issues, on his own authority, the decrees accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering it resigned.

6. He forwards to the Chamber of Deputies Bills that are delivered to him by the Council of Ministers.

7. He accredits ambassadors and accept the credentials of ambassadors.

8. He presides over official functions and grants official decorations by Decree.

9. He grants particular pardons by Decree, but a general amnesty cannot be granted except by a law.

10. He addresses, when necessary, letters to the Chamber of Deputies.

11. He may introduce, from outside the agenda, any urgent matter to the council of Ministers.

12. He may, in agreement with the Prime Minister, call the Council of Ministers to an extraordinary session, whenever he deems this necessary.

Article 54 [Countersignature]

The decisions of the President must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the Minister or Ministers concerned except the Decree designating a new Prime Minister and the Decree accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering it resigned. Decrees issuing laws must be countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Article 55 [Dissolution of Parliament by Decree]

(1) The President of the Republic may, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Articles 65 and 77 of this constitution, ask the Council of Ministers to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the expiration of its mandate. If the Council, based on this request, decides to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, the President issues the Decree dissolving it, and in this case, the electoral bodies meet as provided for in Article 25, and the new Chamber is to be called to convene within fifteen days after the proclamation of the election.

(2) The administrative staff of the Chamber of Deputies continues to function until the election or a new Chamber.

(3) If elections are not held within the time limit specified in Article 25 of the constitution, the Decree dissolving the Chamber is considered null and void, and the Chamber of Deputies continues to exercise its powers according to the stipulations of the constitution.

Article 56 [Promulgation Time Limits]

(1) The President of the Republic promulgates the laws which have been adopted within one month of their transmission to the Government. He must

promulgate laws that were declared urgent by a special Decision of the Chamber within five days.

(2) The President issues decrees and requests their promulgation; he has the right to ask the Council of Ministers to review any Decision that the Chamber has taken within fifteen days of the decision's transmission to the Presidency. If the Council of Ministers insists on the Decision or if the time limit passes without the Decree being issued or returned, the Decision or Decree is considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 57 [Presidential Veto]

The President of the Republic, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, has the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its promulgation. This request may not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he is not required to promulgate this law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all the members legally composing the Chamber. If the time limits pass without the law being issued or returned, the law is considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 58 [Urgent Bills]

Every Bill the Council of Ministers deems urgent and in which this urgency is indicated in the decree of transmission to the Chamber of Deputies may be issued by the President within forty days following its communication to the Chamber, after including it on the agenda of a general meeting, reading it aloud before the Chamber, and after the expiration of the time limit without the Chamber acting on it.

Article 59 [Adjourning the Chamber]

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chamber for a period not exceeding one month, but he may not do so twice during the same session.

Article 60 [Responsibility]

(1) While performing his functions, the President of the Republic may not be held responsible except when he violates the constitution or in the case of high treason.

(2) However, his responsibility in respect of ordinary crimes is subject to the

ordinary laws. For such crimes, as well as for violation of the constitution and for high treason, he may not be impeached except by a majority of two thirds of the total membership of the Chamber of Deputies. He is to be tried by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The functions of Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Council are performed by a judge appointed by the Supreme Council in plenary session.

Article 61 [Suspension after Impeachment]

Should the President of the Republic be impeached, he is suspended from his functions. The presidency remains vacant until the Supreme Council has settled the matter.

Article 62 [Vacancy]

Should the Presidency become vacant for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers exercises the powers of the President by delegation.

Article 63 [Remuneration]

The remuneration of the President of the Republic is determined by a law. It may not be increased or reduced during his term of office.

[Section] 2. The Prime Minister

Article 64 [Responsibility and Powers]

The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and its representative. He speaks in its name and is responsible for executing the general policy that is set by the Council of Ministers. He exercises the following powers:

1. He heads the Council of Ministers and is *ex officio* Deputy Head of the Supreme Defense Council.
2. He conducts the parliamentary consultations involved in forming a Cabinet. He signs, with the President, the Decree forming the Cabinet. The Cabinet must present its general statement or policy to the Chamber and gain its confidence within thirty days of the date of issuance of the Decree in which the Cabinet was formed. The Cabinet does not exercise its powers before it gains the Chamber's confidence nor after it has resigned or is considered resigned, except in the narrow sense of managing affairs.

3. He presents the Government's general policy statements before the Chamber of Deputies.
4. He signs, along with the President, all decrees, except the Decree which designates him the head of the Government, and the Decree accepting the Cabinet's resignation or considering it resigned.
5. He signs the Decree calling for an extraordinary parliamentary session, decrees issuing laws, and requests for reviewing laws.
6. He calls the Council of Ministers into session and sets its agenda, and he informs the President and the Ministers beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed.
7. He supervises the activities of the public administrations and institutions, coordinates among the Ministers and provides general guidance to ensure the proper progress of affairs.
8. He holds working meetings with the competent authorities in the Government in the presence of the concerned Minister.

[Section] 3. The Council of Ministers

Article 65 [Powers]

Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers. It is the authority to which the armed forces are subject. Among the powers that it exercises are the following:

1. It sets the general policy of the Government in all fields, prepares Bills and organizational Decrees and makes the decisions necessary for implementing them.
2. It watches over the execution of laws and regulations and supervises the activities of all the Government's branches including the civil, military, and security administrations and institutions without exception.
3. It appoints Government employees and dismisses them and accepts their resignations according to the law.
4. It dissolves the Chamber of Deputies upon the request of the President of the Republic if the Chamber of Deputies, for no compelling reasons, fails to meet during one of its regular periods and fails to meet throughout two

successive extraordinary periods, each longer than one month, or if the Chamber returns an annual budget plan with the aim of paralyzing the Government. This right cannot be exercised a second time if it is for the same reasons which led to the dissolution of the Chamber the first time.

5. The Council of Ministers meets in a locale specifically set aside for it, and the President chairs its meetings when he attends. The legal quorum for a Council meeting is a majority of two thirds of its members. It makes its decisions by consensus. If that is not possible, it makes its decisions by vote of the majority of attending members. Basic national issues require the approval of two thirds of the members of the Council named in the Decree forming the Cabinet. Basic national issues are considered the following:

The amendment of the constitution, the declaration of a state of emergency and its termination, war and peace, general mobilization, international agreements and treaties, the annual government budget, comprehensive and longterm development projects, the appointment of Grade One government employees and their equivalents, the review of the administrative map, the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, electoral laws, nationality laws, personal status laws, and the dismissal of Ministers.

Article 66 [Ministries, Responsibility]

Only Lebanese who satisfy the conditions for deputization may assume ministerial posts. The Ministers administer the Government's services and assume the responsibility of applying the laws and regulations, each one according to the affairs of his administration and what is specific to them. Ministers are collectively responsible before the Chamber for the general policy of the Government and individually responsible for their personal actions.

Article 67 [Ministers in Parliament]

Ministers may attend the Chamber if they so desire, and they have the right to be heard whenever they request to speak. They may be assisted by whomever they select from among the officials of their Departments.

Article 68 [Vote of No-Confidence]

When the Chamber, in accordance with Article 37, passes a vote of noconfidence in a Minister, that Minister is required to resign.

Article 69 [Government Resignation]

(1) The Government is considered resigned in the following circumstances:

- a. if the Prime Minister resigns;
- b. if it loses more than a third of the members specified in the Decree forming it;
- c. if the Prime Minister dies;
- d. at the beginning of the term of the President of the Republic;
- e. at the beginning of the term of the Chamber of Deputies;
- f. when it loses the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies based on the Chamber's initiative or based on the Council's initiative to gain the Chamber's confidence.

(2) Ministers are to be dismissed by a Decree signed by the President and the Prime Minister in accordance with Article 65 of the constitution.

(3) When the Council resigns or is considered resigned, the Chamber of Deputies is automatically considered in extraordinary session until a new Council has been formed and has gained the Chamber's confidence.

Article 70 [Impeachment]

(1) The Chamber of Deputies has the right to impeach the Prime Minister and Ministers for high treason or for serious neglect of their duties. The Decision to impeach may not be taken except by a majority of two thirds of the total membership of the Chamber.

(2) A special law is to be issued to determine the conditions of the civil responsibility of the Prime Minister and individual Ministers.

Article 71 [Judicial Impeachment Proceedings]

The impeached Prime Minister or Minister are tried by the Supreme Council.

Article 72 [Consequences of Impeachment]

A Prime Minister or Minister leaves office as soon as the Decision of impeachment concerning him is issued. If he resigns, his resignation does not prevent judicial proceedings from being instituted or continued against him.

[Part] C. Procedural Provisions

[Chapter] I. Election of the President of the Republic

Article 73 [Election of the President]

One month at least and two months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the Chamber is summoned by its President to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should it not be summoned for this purpose, the Chamber meets of its own accord on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

Article 74 [Vacancy of Presidency]

Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chamber meets immediately and by virtue of the law to elect a successor. If the Chamber happens to be dissolved at the time the vacancy occurs, the electoral bodies are convened without delay and, as soon as the elections have taken place, the Chamber meets by virtue of the law.

Article 75

The Chamber meeting to elect the President of the Republic is considered an electoral body and not a legislative assembly. It must proceed immediately, without discussion or any other act, to elect the Head of the State.

[Chapter] II. Amending the Constitution

Article 76 [Proposal]

The constitution may be revised upon the proposal of the President of the Republic. In such a case the Government submits a draft law to the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 77 [Request]

The constitution may also be revised upon the request of the Chamber of Deputies. In this case the following procedures are to be observed: During an

ordinary session and at the request of at least ten of its members, the Chamber of Deputies may recommend, by a majority of two thirds of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the revision of the constitution. However, the articles and the questions referred to in the recommendation must be clearly defined and specified. The President of the Chamber then transmits the recommendation to the Government requesting it to prepare a draft law relating thereto. If the Government approves the recommendation of the Chamber by a majority of two thirds, it must prepare the draft amendment and submit it to the Chamber within four months; it does not agree, it shall return the Decision to the Chamber for reconsideration. If the Chamber insists upon the necessity of the amendment by a majority of three fourths of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the President of the Republic has then either to accede to the Chamber's recommendation or to ask the Council of Ministers to dissolve the Chamber and to hold new elections within three months. If the new Chamber insists on the necessity of amending the constitution, the Government must yield and submit the draft amendment within four months.

Article 78 [Priority]

When a draft law dealing with a constitutional amendment is submitted to the Chamber, it must confine itself to its discussion before any other work until a final vote is taken. It may discuss and vote only on articles and questions clearly enumerated and defined in the draft submitted to it.

Article 79 [Majority, Promulgation]

(1) When a draft law dealing with a constitutional amendment is submitted to the Chamber, it cannot discuss it or vote upon it except when a majority of two thirds of the members lawfully composing the Chamber are present. Voting is by the same majority.

(2) The President of the Republic is required to promulgate the law of the constitutional amendment under the same conditions and in the same form as ordinary laws. He has the right, within the period established for the promulgation, to ask the Chamber to reconsider the draft, after consultation with the council of Ministers, in which case the vote is by a majority of two thirds.

[Part] D. Miscellaneous Provisions

[Chapter] I. The Supreme Council

Article 80 [Function, Composition, Organizational Law]

The Supreme Council, whose function is to try Presidents and Ministers, consists of seven deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies and of eight of the highest Lebanese judges, according to their rank in the judicial hierarchy, or, in case of equal ranks, in the order of seniority. They meet under the presidency of the judge of the highest rank. The Decisions of condemnation by the Supreme Council is rendered by a majority of ten votes. A special law is to be issued to determine the procedure to be followed by this Council.

[Chapter] II. Finances

Article 81 [Integral Tax Law]

No public taxes may be imposed and no new taxes established or collected in the Lebanese Republic except by a comprehensive law which applies to the entire Lebanese territory without exception.

Article 82 [Rule of Law]

No tax may be modified or abolished except by virtue of law.

Article 83 [Yearly Budget]

Each year at the beginning of the October session, the Government has to submit to the Chamber of Deputies the general budget estimates of state expenditures and revenues for the following year. The budget is voted upon article by article.

Article 84 [Budget Discussion]

During the discussion of the budget and draft laws involving the opening of supplementary or extraordinary credits, the Chamber may not increase the credits proposed in the budget or in the draft laws mentioned above either by way of amendment Or by means of a proposal. The Chamber may, however, adopt, by way of proposal, laws involving further expenditures after the close of this discussion.

Article 85 [Extraordinary Credit]

No extraordinary credit may be opened except by a special law. Nevertheless, should unforeseen circumstances render urgent expenditures necessary, the President of the Republic may issue a Decree, based on a Decision of the Council or Ministers, to open extraordinary or supplementary credits or transfer appropriations in the budget as long as these credits do not exceed a maximum limit specified in the budget law. These measures are to be submitted to the Chamber for approval at the first ensuing session.

Article 86 [Provisional Budget]

If the Chamber of Deputies has not given a final decision on the budget estimates before the expiration of the session devoted to the examination of the budget, the President of the Republic, in coordination with the Prime Minister, immediately convenes the Chamber for an extraordinary session which lasts until the end of January in order to continue the discussion of the budget; if, at the end of this extraordinary session, the budget estimates have not been finally settled, the Council of Ministers may take a decision on the basis of which a decree is issued by the President giving effect to the above estimates in the form in which they were submitted to the Chamber. However, the Council of Ministers may not exercise this right unless the budget estimates were submitted to the Chamber at least fifteen days before the commencement of its session. Nevertheless, during the said extraordinary session, taxes, charges, duties, imposts, and other kinds of revenues continue to be collected as before. The budget of the previous year is adopted as a basis. To this must be added the permanent credits which have been dropped, and the Government fixes the expenditures for the month of January on the basis of the 'provisional twelfth.'

Article 87 [Final Financial Accounts, Auditing Bureau]

The final financial accounts of the administration for each year must be submitted to the Chamber for approval before the promulgation of the budget of the year following. A special law is to be issued for the setting up of an Auditing Bureau.

Article 88 [Public Loan]

No public loan or undertaking involving an expenditure from the treasury funds may be contracted except by virtue of a law.

Article 89 [Contracts, Concessions, Resources, Monopolies]

No contract or concession for the exploitation of the natural resources of the country, or a public utility service, or a monopoly may be granted except by virtue of a law and for a limited period.

[Part] E. Provisions Relating to the Mandatory Power and the League of Nations

Article 90 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 91 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 92 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 93 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 94 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

[Part] F. On the Abolition of Political Confessionalism

Article 95 [National Committee]

(1) The first Chamber of Deputies which is elected on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians takes the appropriate measures to realize the abolition of political confessionalism according to a transitional plan. A National Committee is to be formed, headed by the President of the Republic, including, in addition to the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the Prime Minister, leading political, intellectual, and social figures.

(2) The tasks of this Committee are to study and propose the means to ensure the abolition of confessionalism, propose them to the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministers, and supervise the execution of the transitional plan.

(3) During the transitional phase:

a. The confessional groups are to be represented in a just and equitable fashion in the formation of the Cabinet.

b. The principle of confessional representation in public service jobs, in the judiciary, in the military and security institutions, and in public and mixed agencies are to be cancelled in accordance with the requirements of national reconciliation; they shall be replaced by the principle of expertise and competence. However, Grade One posts and their equivalents are exempt from this rule, and the posts must be distributed equally between Christians and Muslims without reserving any particular job for any confessional group but rather applying the principles of expertise and competence.

[Part] G. Provisions Relating to the Election and Functions of the Senate

Article 96 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 97 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 98 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 99 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 100 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

[Part] H. Additional Provisions

Article 101 [Greater Lebanon, The Lebanese Republic]

Beginning 1 Sep 1929, the state of 'Greater Lebanon' is to be known as 'The Lebanese Republic' without any other change or modification.

Article 102 [Abrogation of Old Laws]

All legislative provisions contrary to the present constitution are abrogated

United Nations Security Council

2 September 2004

Resolution 1559 (2004)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 5028th meeting, on 2 September 2004

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) of 19 March 1978, resolution 520 (1982) of 17 September 1982, and resolution 1553 (2004) of 29 July 2004 as well as the statements of its President on the situation in Lebanon, in particular the statement of 18 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/21),

Reiterating its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally territorially recognized borders,

Noting the determination of Lebanon to ensure the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon,

Gravely concerned at the continued presence of armed militias in Lebanon, which prevent the Lebanese government from exercising its full sovereignty over all Lebanese territory,

Reaffirming the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory,

Mindful of the upcoming Lebanese presidential elections and underlining the importance of free and fair elections according to Lebanese

1. *Reaffirms* its call for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon;
2. *Calls* upon all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon;
3. *Calls for* the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias;
4. *Supports* the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory;
5. *Declares* its support for a free and fair electoral process in Lebanon's upcoming presidential election conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence;

6. *Calls upon* all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently with the Security Council for the full implementation of this and all relevant resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon;
7. *Requests* that the Secretary-General report to the Security Council within thirty days on the implementation by the parties of this resolution and decides to remain actively seized of this matter.

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New York Times	(New York) Daily
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The Nations	(Bangkok) Daily
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Nation Weekly	(Bangkok) Thai, Weekly